

TOTAL!

January 1992

Issue 1

£1.95

NEW!
You've never seen a mag like it...

100% FOR NINTENDO PLAYERS

A totally independent mag from Future Publishing

NINTENDO EXPLOSION!

Our total NES
and Game Boy
action will blow
you away!

WHAT A HOOT!

CHORTLE! - As we show you
the best games in the shop!

SNIGGER! - As our tips help
you finish Super Mario Bros!

GRIN! - When you win one of
our three superb Game Boys!

SMIRK! - When you're TOTAL!
Gameplayer Champion! And...

SMILE WEAKLY - As we try
desperately to be funny



Future
PUBLISHING
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guarantee of
value

WOWZER! 84 pages of 'total' Nintendo action!

TOTAL!

100% FOR NINTENDO PLAYERS

Hi there!

Welcome to the first issue of a very special magazine. It's special because TOTAL! is the only British magazine completely dedicated to Nintendo games and Nintendo game players.

No longer will you have to sift through pages and pages of reviews on other systems just so that you can check out new games for your favourite machine.

No. What TOTAL! will have is Nintendo reviews – and lots of 'em. Every month we'll bring you our verdict on the latest Nintendo releases for the NES and Game Boy. We'll try to review games just before they appear – not four months in advance just so we can slap 'Exclusive!!!' on the cover. That way, if you like what you see, you don't have wait long before you can buy it.

So what *won't* you see in TOTAL!? Well for starters you'll never see a review from one of the lesser consoles. No Sega, no Atari, no NEC. We don't care about them: it's Nintendo or nothing.

You won't see naff screen shots with PAUSE slapped right in the middle. You won't see blurred pictures that look like they were taken on the bus on the way in that morning.

Also, you won't see great big pictures of the box artwork. We only show you pictures from the game itself (after all, that's what you buy the mag for). And we'll use as many as it takes to show what the game is all about. After reading our reviews, you'll feel as if you've already played the games for yourself.

Totally independent!

TOTAL! is not published by Nintendo. It comes to you from a team of dedicated Nintendo experts, who love the NES and Game Boy and wouldn't dream of playing on anything else.

We have the backing of Future Publishing, Britain's largest publisher of computer game magazines. Together we can bring you the Nintendo coverage you deserve.

But more importantly, because we're independent, we can say what we really think. If we tell you a game is brilliant, you're safe in the knowledge that it really is worth buying.

You've never seen a mag like it!

January 1
Issue



Stop showing off Andy – it's not big or clever. You're covering the issue number you great twonk. People won't know it's issue one (which it is)



The team

TOTAL! is brought to you by Steve Jarratt and Andy Dyer – Nintendo freaks, the pair of 'em. They're the ones who play and review all the games (lucky devils).

These two write the reviews, take the pictures and even appear in the reviews themselves. They may look a little strange but you can trust them to tell it like it is.

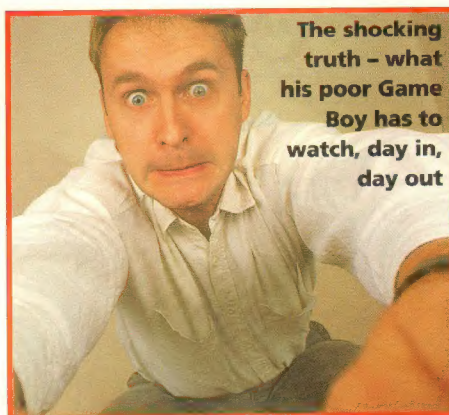
Steve Jarratt

(Also known as 'Misery Guts', 'Baldy', 'Stinge Bag' and 'Old Geek')



This is how Steve imagines himself playing on his beloved Game Boy

Steve's the man in charge. Unfortunately, he's only in charge of Andy, so he may as well be in charge of a bag of pebbles. Still, at least he can pick all the best games to review. Steve's been working on games mags for years, so he knows a decent game when he plays it. Fave carts this issue are Super Mario Bros 3 (NES), Solar Jetman (NES) and Super R.C. Pro-Am (Game Boy).



The shocking truth – what his poor Game Boy has to watch, day in, day out



LOVES

Nintendo games. Cars. Science fiction/special FX-type films. Beating Andy's high score on anything

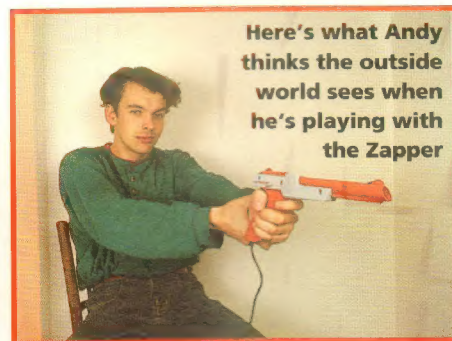


HATES

Andy. Baghead. Not being able to beat stupid NES Tetris on level 9, height 5. Other consoles

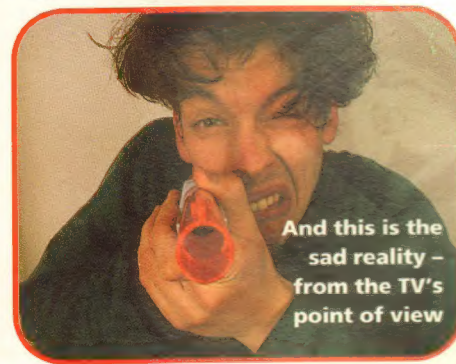
Andy Dyer

(or 'Thicky Dyer', 'Smelly', 'Oy You' and 'Insignificant Little Wretchoid Creature')



Here's what Andy thinks the outside world sees when he's playing with the Zapper

Andy (or 'Thicky' to his mates) is a relative newcomer to games mags, but he's been a Nintendo fan for years. What Andy doesn't know about Nintendo games really isn't worth knowing. Andy is the second in command. Mind you, he's only second in command because there aren't three people on the team. Fave games this issue are Super Mario Bros 3 (NES), Snake Rattle 'N' Roll (NES), Turtles – Fall Of The Foot Clan (Game Boy) and Chessmaster (Game Boy).



And this is the sad reality – from the TV's point of view



LOVES

All this Nintendo stuff. Beating Steve at anything. Annoying Steve and Baghead. Drinking huge amounts of Tea and Coffee



HATES

Steve. Baghead. Being poor. Being completely unimportant. Small cups

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There's more to Nintendo than just games. There are films, books, videos, models, toys – even cereal! Find out who's playing Nintendo games and why. Come here for anything Nintendo-related, snippets, gossip, rumour – and maybe some news as well!

BECOME A NINTENDO EXPERT! 6



THE TOTAL! GUIDE TO HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE
Take a look at our TOTAL! guide to Nintendo. Why you should buy a Nintendo, what systems you can buy, and what you can buy for your system. Plus the TOTAL! team tell you how to set up your NES – and how not to (oh dear).

NES REVIEWS 11



There are 20 Nintendo Entertainment System game paks under the TOTAL! spotlight. We play 'em 'till they squeal, so you know what's hot and what's not.

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Want a Game Boy? Why not win one? We've got three of the little blighters just waiting for a new owner!

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Are you good enough to beat the best Nintendo players in the country? Take up our challenge on page 42!

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We help you get started on Super Mario Bros and Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles on the NES, Super Mario Land and Tetris on the Game Boy, plus loads more!

GAME BOY REVIEWS 61



Do you own the best hand-held console in the world? Good, then you'll be interested in our Game Boy reviews – we test no fewer than 20 of the latest titles!

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There's no better way of getting TOTAL! than having it delivered to your door each month. Check out our subscription offer and get total Nintendo coverage!

BAGHEAD
TOTAL's
Crayon-type
art person.



Hold on, Andy! The contents are colour-coded – Mario is in the blue section

Where's Super Mario Bros. 3? I can't wait!



Roll those credits!

As you've probably guessed already, it takes more than two ugly, incompetent games players to produce a mag of such outstanding quality as TOTAL! Here are the names of those who made it possible.

Editorial (Key-tappers)

All (well, most) of the words in TOTAL! have been written with great thought, care and attention, using some jolly impressive Macintosh computer things, by:

Number 1 Steve 'Misery Guts' Jarratt
Number 2 Andy 'Thicky' Dyer

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Thanks also to:

Our wunnerful, talented, handsome (he could go on and on) landlord – sorry about the mess. Erm, it was Andy... The strange, sad and mad old lady who works at the local newsagents... The people who invented the microwave oven... Mr Ben (Taylor that is) and the colour orange. This issue of TOTAL! was brought to by the letter 'P' (for panic). Quick compo: what's the odd game out this issue? (Clue: Look at the pix)



Coming right up

Here's a bunch of titles well worth keeping an eye out for. But don't worry – as soon as they're ready, we'll be giving them the TOTAL! treatment...

● Star Wars (Coming up on NES; Game Boy a little later)

The game of the brilliant George Lucas film (one of Steve's faves: he can talk about the special effects in it for hours – and frequently does).

● Dragon's Lair (NES)

Classic arcade animated action. But the question they're all asking is: will it have the gameplay? You'll just have to wait for the TOTAL! review to find out...

● Maniac Mansion (NES)

Superb and highly enthralling game from Lucasfilm, well worth looking out for.

● Mission Impossible (NES)

Conversion of the TV series which starred Mr Spock pretending he wasn't really a Vulcan and actually was an American spy-type thing, honest. You know the one: 'This tape will self destruct in five seconds' and all that. Given the nature of the series – brave guys do impossible missions (hence the title, you see) against the clock – it's surprising it hasn't been done before. Well, er, now it has been, or soon will be anyway!



Coming right up: the second Bart game – the first one's reviewed on page 22

THE TOTAL! ADVENTURE

STARTS HERE

So what's it all about then? turn to page 27 to find out how to play...

FACT: 1,300,000 people now own NES and Game Boys in the UK

Everyone's gone Nintendo crazy!

By Our Man Standing Outside
Dixons Counting The Huge Number
Of People Coming Out Carrying
Boxes With 'Nintendo' Written On
Them And Smiles On Their Faces

BY THE TIME the last exhausted shop assistant has closed the last door of the last shop to shut on Christmas Eve, more than half-a-million NES machines will have been sold in the UK *this year alone*. So say a rather happy-looking Nintendo.

That astonishing figure is only slightly more than for Game Boys – making an overall UK total of over 1,300,000 Nintendos. This is truly an amazing stat-, stitast-, er, amazing fact, since twice as many Nintendos have been sold in UK this year as in the last two *put together!*

This is all great news, of course. Why? Well, the more Nintendos there are, the greater the choice of games that will be appearing on it.

And that's where we come in. Because TOTAL! is the *only*

independent mag in Britain 100% dedicated to Nintendo!

Neverending Nintendo

Put all these Nintendos together and they would reach all the way to Birmingham – though it all rather depends on where you start from, of course.

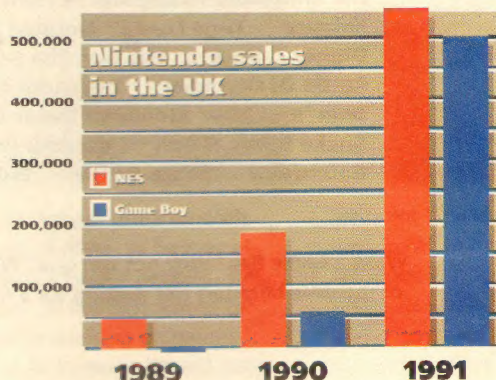
Hang on, I've got a calculator here somewhere... (*Rummage, rummage.*) Yeah, that means enough NES machines and Game Boys are now in the UK to reach from London (just next to Big Ben,

in fact) to Birmingham *and all the way back again!* That's, erm, a lot of Nintendos.

That's not the only amazing Nintendo fact, either, amazing Nintendo fact fans. For, if you're between four years old and 15, Nintendo reckon you've seen their TV ads more than 30 times this autumn! Unfortunately you can't really place TV ads together to see how far they'd stretch, but if you could I reckon they'd go round the world about six times, probably.

And it doesn't stop there,

either. Oh dearie me no, we've got some more room to fill up yet. Try this one: if you filled out the Club Nintendo membership form you found with your new NES or Game Boy, you're just one of 350,000 people who did – that's enough people to fill Wembley Stadium (the seats, not the pitch) 40 times! Blimey!



Drop us a line, why don't you?

As you flick through TOTAL! you'll notice one thing we *don't* have is letters. And that, of course, is because this is issue one, and no-one knew where to write to before!

But soon all that will change. Next month we'll be printing your letter – if you remember to write in, that is! We've got stuff to give away for the best ones.

So whatever's on your mind, Nintendo-wise, drop us a line: **Print This Now So I Can Show Off To My Mates, TOTAL!, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.**

Can we come round to your house?



As you know, Steve and Andy don't have many mates – so why not invite them round to your house for tea and cakes?

All you have to do is this:

1. Ask your mum or dad if you can invite them.
2. Send in your name, address and

phone number to: **TOTAL! Tea Time, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.**

3. Wait a bit. We can't guarantee to get around to everyone's house, but each month we'll pop

round to someone's place, have a cup of tea, show them a few of the latest games, give away a few prizes and stuff, and generally Have A Pretty Good Time.

Steve and Andy do have some requests, however. You *must* be able to provide: one cup of tea (with two sugars) for Andy; one can of Lucozade Sport for Steve; six chocolate eclairs and four doughnuts. That's the deal: *no doughnuts, no show!*



Shop!

In Japan Nintendo has started setting up its own shops. In fact, by this time next year there'll be 1,000 of them. Imagine that: shops selling Nintendo machines, Nintendo cartridges and Nintendo bits and pieces. Nintendo heaven!

We've already asked Nintendo if we can launch the first one in Britain. We reckon it would be dead easy to do it from the TOTAL! office. Of course, we'd have to test all the stuff first, just to make sure. It's hard work, but someone's got to do it...

Pssssst. Hear anything smart?

People like secrets don't they? And no-one likes a secret more than we do, we can tell you.

So if you find out any snippets of Nintendo info, why not tell us? We promise we won't tell anybody else. Except all you TOTAL! readers of course, but that doesn't count really, does it?

Write to us at TOTAL! Secrets, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.

Hurrah! The Super NES is coming! The Super NES is coming!

The Super NES is coming!

At last! The 16-bit all-singing all-dancing console we've been waiting for all these years is finally going to be available in Britain. And sooner than we thought.

For, according to Bandai, who distribute Nintendos in the UK, the Super NES will be here by late April or early May.

The launch has been brought forward from next Christmas because the Nintendo market has become "so sophisticated", according to Bandai's Mike Hayes. That's us he's talking about. Sophisticated, eh? I like this man.

So how much will it cost? £149 looks likely, so there's a bit of saving up to be done before April. Still, gives you an incentive not to spend all that Christmas money that Great Uncle Stanley sends you every year, doesn't it?

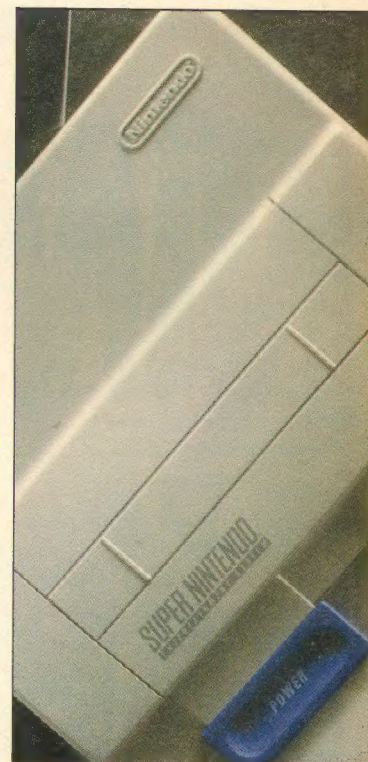
Loads of carts will be available

as soon as it comes out, including F-Zero, Zelda III and Sim City.

In the US, Nintendo reckon they're selling 12 Super NES machines *every single minute*. The company's boss reckons there's a very good reason for this (well, he would, wouldn't he?), or more precisely, *five* very good reasons: "Nintendo makes the best quality products; Nintendo products are tried and tested; Nintendo players like the variety of games available; Nintendo owners like to share their gameplay experiences; Nintendo makes products that offer long-lasting enjoyment."

And we're not going to argue with any of that.

■ Look out for the most up to date and fullest details all about the Super NES, *only* in TOTAL! As the *only* 100% Nintendo mag, *only* we can give it all the detail it deserves!

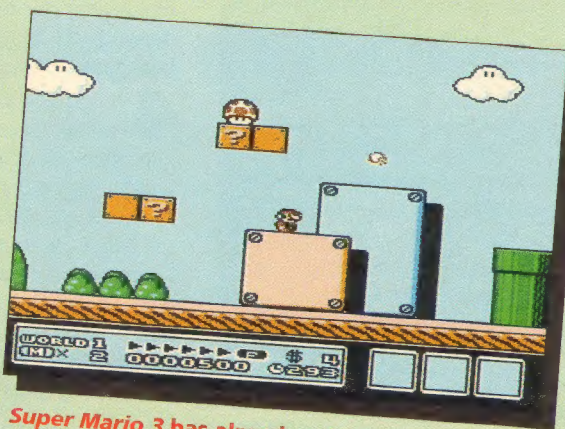


The Super NES: an utterly brilliant machine – and you can buy one in April. Can you wait?

10 Things You Never Wanted To Know About Mario...

Andy has found some 'amazing' true facts about the world's favourite Italian plumber with a moustache. So next time you're stuck for something to say, hit your pals with these:

- 1 Mario first appeared 11 years ago in the ancient coin-op *Donkey Kong* (ask your parents).
- 2 The first real Mario game, *Super Mario Bros*, has sold 23 million copies in the US alone! If it had been a film it would be the second biggest film of all time, just behind *ET*!
- 3 Now it is going to be a film. Weird pint-sized comic Danny DeVito is playing the little chap!
- 4 The third in the series – reviewed on page 12 – has already sold 8 million copies in the US.
- 5 The three games between them are said to have sold more than 40 million (that's 40,000,000 which is quite a lot, really).
- 6 Three-quarters of blokes in the States aged 14-21 plan to call their first son Mario (yuk! I must say, I wouldn't fancy being called Mario).
- 7 And – get this – nearly one in five blokes reckon they'll call their firstborn Mario, even if it's a girlie! Aaaaarggh!
- 8 Luigi doesn't really mind them not being called the Super Luigi Bros. Or does he?



Super Mario 3 has already sold 8 million in the States – but it's still got a long way to go before it catches up with the original, which sold a whopping great 23 million! Phew! (Look out soon for the film starring Danny DeVito, by the way.)

- 9 Both Mario and Luigi really can leap around can't they? (You're getting desperate now aren't you – SJ.)
- 10 Erm... (Yes? – SJ.) Erm... Mario's moustache can (STOP! Right there. That's the last time I let you do the '10 Things' bit, Thick! – SJ.) Doh!

Nintendos on the NHS?

An eight-year-old chap who had the disgusting habit of picking a scab on his upper lip (err-yuk!) was taken to his doctor by his parents, we read in an American newspaper the other day. The doctor, brilliant chap, prescribed a Nintendo Game Boy. It kept the young chap's two hands occupied, and within a fortnight he was right as rain.

Warning: do not try this one at home, kids. This was, after all, in America, where not everyone's dealing with a full deck. There's no chance your own doc will do the same thing, and certainly not on the NHS. He's not *that* daft!

Collector's item!

There are loads of people who collect first issues of magazines. As of now, you're one of them!

So keep this launch issue of TOTAL! safe and it could be worth, ooh, several quids by the year 2031! Wowser!

Bang! You've fallen into a Really Weird Time Warp (er, Man?). Over there, by a large letter 'I' painted on the floor, sits one sad Baghead, not having slept for about 93 hours and looking like it. And lo! And, indeed, behold! There are Thick and Stinge Bag, complaining about the work being longer than the time available, or something. This is very boring and intensely depressing (it's entirely understandable). Time for you to make a sharp exit, methinks. To go north turn to page 24. If you decide on the west exit, head for page 74.

BECOME A NINTENDO EXPERT!

If you're wondering what system to buy, what add-ons to get or simply what to do with the stuff when you've bought it, you'll find all the answers here. By the time you've absorbed this wealth of information, you'll be able to pass yourself off as a TOTAL! Nintendo expert!

If you're about to invest in a Nintendo games machine, you may have been asking yourself a few questions. Well, here's the TOTAL! top 20 questions people ask about Nintendo games machines!

1 What's the difference between an 'NES' and a 'Game Boy'?

The main difference between the machines is in their size and display. The bigger NES (Nintendo Entertainment System) plugs into a mains wall socket and is used with a standard TV. The picture is bright and colourful and since the NES has two joystick ports, two people can play at once.

The game Boy is a portable console or 'hand-held'. This astonishing little device has its own built-in screen, joystick and power source – it's completely self-contained and ever-so-portable (unlike some hand-held machines we could mention!). There's a small built-in speaker, but it's much better to plug in some earphones so you can listen to its impressive stereo sound!

TOTAL! TRUTH!

Nintendo commands 87% of this planet's video gaming

market! They have sold over \$4 billion worth of consoles and games during 1991. The Tokyo-based company has just declare its yearly profits at £675 million! And with only 800 employees, Nintendo earns more money, per person, than Nissan motors. Blimey!

2 So which one do you think I should buy?

Well, since it's bulky and relies on a large TV (and an even larger wall with a socket in it) the NES isn't really designed to be carried around. So if you just want to play in your bedroom or on the family telly, the NES is the one to go for.

But if you want to play as you travel – maybe you spend a long time on the bus – then the Game Boy is the one for you.

3 But why is Nintendo stuff so much more popular?

That's easy: the machines are made to a higher standard and, more importantly, Nintendo has all the best games. Simple as that.

4 How much should I pay for my machine?

That depends on which system you want – and how much you've got to spend. On the next three pages, we take a closer look at all the Nintendo hardware available.

5 What should I expect to find inside the box?

Don't worry, you'll get everything you need to start playing – except for a mains plug! So remember to buy one at the same that you buy your NES! (The Game Boy doesn't need one – it takes batteries.)

6 Don't I need to have a television or something?

The Game Boy comes with its own LCD (liquid crystal display) screen, so that's all right. However, the NES will only work as long as you have a normal television set to plug it into.

TOTAL! TRUTH!

Mario was dreamed up by Shigeru Miyamoto, who based the character on the Italian landlord he had while he stayed in New York. Mario first starred in Nintendo's Donkey Kong arcade machine and then joined his brother, Luigi, in Super Mario Bros. Everyone calls them plumbers, but they are actually supposed to be decorators from Brooklyn!

7 So how do I plug my NES into the telly, then?

In the box you'll find an RF lead. This plugs into the rear of the NES and straight into the aerial socket on your TV. It even has a switch attached so that you can keep the TV aerial plugged in at the same time. When you want to play Nintendo, just flip the switch!

8 How much do Nintendo games cost?

Game Boy cartridges (we call 'em carts) cost from £20 to £25 at the moment, while NES carts can be as little as £20 and as much as £40. The more expensive carts usually contain things like extra chips (for improved sound and graphics) or batteries (so that the cart can remember your game position!).

9 How will I know which games are the best ones to get?

Simple: buy TOTAL! every month. We're the only source of Nintendo info you'll ever need.

10 The different bundles cost different amounts. Which one is best? And what's in it that makes it best?

Again, it depends on what you want. If you fancy taking potshots at your TV, get the Action Set with the Zapper light gun. Then again, if you have lots of brothers and sisters, why not get the Super Set. This has the Four Score multi-player adapter and lets up to four players control characters on screen at the same time – like Gauntlet II for example (reviewed on page 50).

Both pieces of hardware are pretty technical and add a little bit extra to the cost of the package.

11 If I buy a cheaper bundle, can I buy the other stuff that's in the bigger bundles?

Yep. Both the Four Score Adapter and the Zapper light gun are available on their own. You can even buy the bundled games separately as well.

Control Deck Set

What you get!

Price £80



This is the NES (Nintendo Entertainment System) – the heart and soul of your new games set up!



You get two joypads. Without these the NES is pretty useless! You'll soon get used to controlling them.



The single game pak that comes with the Control Deck is Super Mario Bros. The most famous video game of all time! Guide Mario (and his brother Luigi) through the mushroom Kingdom on a mission to rescue Princess Toadstool from the grip of the powerful sorcerer, Bowser.

Mutant Machine

What you get!

Price £80



This is the NES (Nintendo Entertainment System) – the heart and soul of your new games set up!



You get two joypads. Without these the NES is pretty useless! You'll soon get used to controlling them.



The single game pak you get with the Mutant Machine set is Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles. Here, you have to co-ordinate the efforts of all four Turtles as they battle Shredder and his evil Foot Clan footsoldiers. Defeat Shredder himself and rescue April and Splinter!

12 Can I use Game Boy games on the NES and vice versa?

Well, it's doubtful that you'll ever be able to use NES game paks on the Game Boy (they're too big!). However, Camerica (a company based in Canada) are working on a device that allows you to plug Game Boy carts into the NES and see them on a TV screen. It isn't out yet, but we'll keep you posted.

13 I want to join Club Nintendo. How do I do it?

Good thinking. Even we're forced to admit that Club Nintendo is pretty darn good. To join, all you have to do is buy a Nintendo game and rustle around for the card inside. Fill it in, pop it in the post

(you don't even need a stamp) and that's it – you're in! You'll receive the free Club Nintendo magazine every few months, be eligible for special offers and can even phone their new games hotline (and that's pretty good too!).

14 Can my Nintendo do anything else apart from just play games?

There's a new device for the NES called the Miracle, which actually teaches you to play the piano! It comes with a large keyboard and uses game-playing technology to speed up the teaching process.

In America, there are some utility paks available for the Game Boy, like travel guides and foreign language dictionaries. All of a sudden, your Game Boy becomes a French translator! If these paks ever become available over here, we'll let you know.

15 Can I plug my Game Boy into the mains? What about rechargeable batteries?

You can buy rechargeable AA batteries that fit the Game Boy, but Nintendo produce a battery pack designed specifically for the hand-held. Not only is it a rechargeable battery (one charge lasts about 10 hours) but it also lets you play directly from the mains.

TOTAL! TRUTH!

Nintendo claim to have sold half-a-million NES units this year

alone. That's twice as many as in the last two years put together! With almost as many Game Boys being sold that brings the total (ha!) number of Nintendos in Britain to a staggering 1,330,000! Stewth! Well, let's hope you all buy TOTAL! eh?

16 Are my NES and Game Boy guaranteed?

Yes. As soon as you crack the packaging open, search for the warranty card and fill it in. Send it away with your shop receipt and you'll get a 90-day warranty.

17 If my Nintendo breaks down outside the warranty period, what do I do to get it repaired?

Carefully package up your poorly Nintendo and send it (with a description of its ailment) to: Bandai UK Ltd., PO Box 104, Fareham, Hants PO16 8UR. The technicians there will check it out and then send you an estimate of how much it will cost to repair.

18 Can I plug my NES into a computer monitor?

Sure. Take a look at the right hand side of your NES. There are two sockets labelled Audio and Video. With the right cable (probably phono plug to DIN plug) you can connect your NES to monitors with a 'Composite Video' input. The picture is sharper and the colours that bit brighter.

19 Can I get stereo sound from my Nintendo?

Only the Game Boy has true stereo, but you can boost the sound from both the NES and Game Boy by getting the right lead (go somewhere like Tandy). Link the audio output (earphone jack on the game Boy) to the AUX input on a ghettoblaster or an amp – and crank up the volume!

20 I'm not too keen on this joypad thingy. Can I get a joystick like my mate's?

Nintendo do produce a 'proper' joystick called the NES Advantage. This has an arcade-style stick control instead of a pad and also features a number of additional controls. It has a slow-motion control and variable turbo fire (for those hectic shoot 'em ups). To see what it's like, take a closer look at the picture on the following page.

TOTAL! TRUTH!

In Japan, the biggest-selling Nintendo games are those in the

Dragon Warrior series. These games, which are coded by Enix, are so popular that Dragon Warrior 3 sold out in a matter of hours when it was released. Disappointed customers were found stealing copies from small children rather than go home Dragon Warrior 3-less!

You find yourself in a square room with stone walls and a wooden floor. There is a sign hanging from the ceiling which reads, 'Welcome to Bugs Bunny's Crazy Castle. Beware all ye who enter, for the unwary traveller may get horribly lost. Make a map or perish!' This sounds like decent advice, you think to yourself. You also notice a large letter 'R' painted on the floor. There are two exits from the room. One leads south and the other east. If you want to use the south exit turn to page 39. If you want to travel east turn to page 13.

Action Set

Price £100



What you get! Included in the Action Set is the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), two joypads and the Zapper light gun. The single game pak in the set is a combination cartridge containing Super Mario Bros. and Duck Hunt. The picture above shows you a screen shot of Duck Hunt, while our dashing handsome model on the left poses with the Zapper! Point the Zapper at the TV and pull the trigger!

Adding to your set-up

Although your NES system is a pretty mean piece of hardware, you can always improve your set-up by adding bits and pieces to it.

For example, if you find it difficult getting to grips with the thumb-control joypads supplied with the NES, you can choose from a number of other control devices.

These are made by Nintendo themselves or other 'third-party' manufacturers like Acclaim (they produce a nifty infra-red joypad which doesn't need any cables!).

Alternatively, you might want to take a bash at sharp-shooting with the Zapper light gun. To kill your enemies, just point at the TV screen and press the trigger!



NES MAX
Price £25
This unusual joypad gets rid of the customary cross-shaped

pad, replacing it with a rotating disk. As the disk hits the outside ring, it activates the switches. It's a nice idea but it really doesn't work that well and is uncomfortable.



NES Advantage
Price £40
Heavy-duty hardware time. This is a joystick

rather than a joypad and has among its many features: two fire buttons with independent fast fire and an ability to slow down NES games (but it's not much cop!).

Setting up your NES with Stevie J



1 Sensible as ever. Steve J has been into town to buy an Action Set. How neat everything looks in those carrier bags.



2 Always look after the warranty and read the instructions carefully. Everyone knows that...



3 Nintendos come without plugs. You did remember to buy a plug didn't you? Well, Stevie J did at least.



4 Remember, brown is live, blue is neutral. If in doubt get somebody else to wire the plug for you.



5 Stupid, and thick. Weed! Well, a total nerdy-dweeby-berk. One person can't be that completely thick.



1 Not so Thick Dyer. In his rush to get home with his goodies, he's come a cropper on the steps. What a nerk!



2 ... Er, except Dyer it seems. No, it's rubbish tip city for him. And what is he doing with those documents?



3 Oh good grief! Young Thick takes living up to his name a bit seriously doesn't he? Back to the shops then.



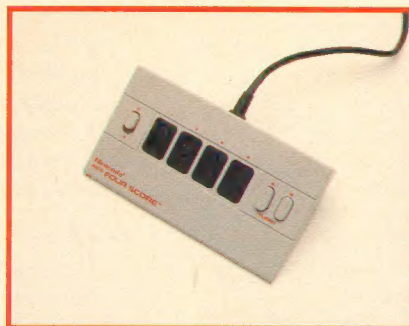
4 Typical, just typical! Oh well, it will only take me an hour to walk to the shops, er, and an hour to walk back again!



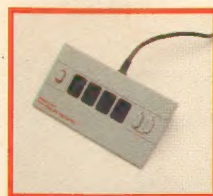
5 Oh! so the brown one is the completely and utterly-stay-away-at-all-costs live wire then! Not the blue one. Oops!

Super Set

Price £100



What you get! Included in the Super Set is a Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), four joypads and the Four Score multi-player adapter. The single game pak included with the Super Set is a combination cartridge containing Super Mario Bros., Tetris and Nintendo World Cup. Tetris is a challenging puzzle game, while Nintendo World cup makes use of the Four Score Adapter. You can play football with four people at the same time!



Four Score Adapter
Price £30
With games like Super Off Road and Gauntlet II on

the shelves, you may want to invest in one of these. It enables you to plug in four separate joypads for use with specially designed four-player games. It's fab!



Zapper Light Gun
Price £30
Not everyone wants to buy an action set, so it's just as

well you can buy the Zapper light gun separately. There are several games you can use with this natty device like Duck Hunt, Hogan's Alley and the new To The Earth.



Joypads
So what happens if your joypads go foom!? Well, one course of

action is to contact Bandai – the people who distribute Nintendo products in this country. Their address is: Bandai UK Ltd. PO Box 104, Fareham, Hants PO16 8UR.



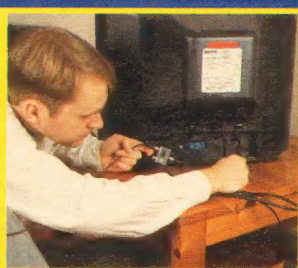
NES
Don't be silly! NES's don't break down. However, if the dog eats your cables or

a younger brother dribbles into the cartridge port, you can send it away to be mended. Bandai are the guys to contact at: Bandai UK Ltd. PO Bqx 104, Fareham, Hants PO16 8UR.

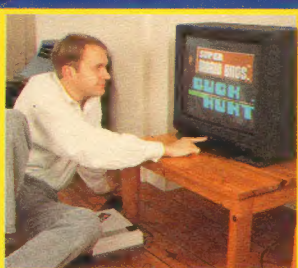
and Thick Dyer



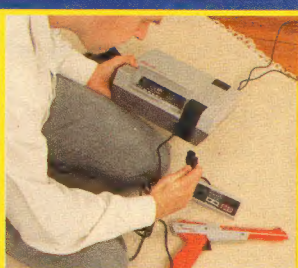
6 OK! So now you'll be wanting a picture. First step is to put the RF lead into the RF socket on the back of your NES.



7 Using the two-way connector provided, Steve should have both NES and TV pictures at the flick of a switch!



8 Steve has managed to get it all up and running in record time. He is already practising his sickly smug grin.



9 Time to plug in the Joypads. Smug Steve is still finding all this a bit too easy. Surely Thick *this* time...



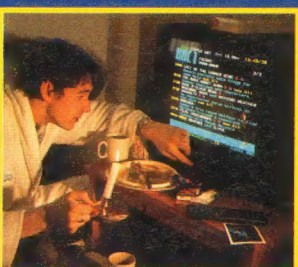
10 Game Pak inserted, Steve sits down to practice being clever in his usual smarmy unpleasant way.



6 Alternatively, you could tie all the wires into a granny knot and shove them in the cartridge port. Twonk!



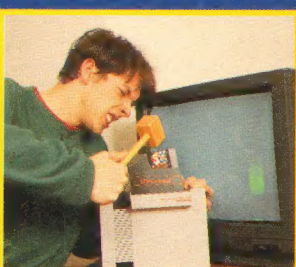
7 This is all getting quite sad. Thicky tries to broadcast piccies from his NES using the latest closet technology.



8 After working hard for several hours, Thicky finally makes his first big breakthrough. Ceefax... Oh dear!

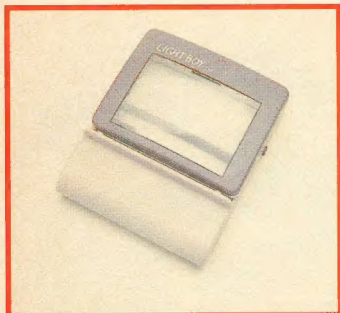


9 In his rush to open his brand new toy the brainless Dyer tweebs has gone and binned those important joypads.



10 Thicky thinks that this new console is a bit tight – you know, 'cos it's new. Pathetic isn't it?

The Game Boy



Vic Tokai Light Boy £30
Compact screen magnifier and illuminator. Dead smart!
★★★★★



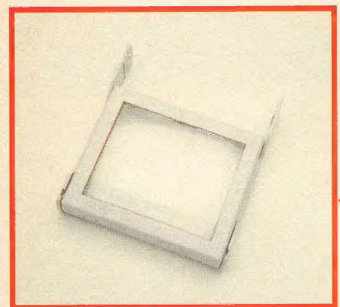
Nuby Game Light £10
Small and neat, but doesn't light the screen very evenly. You get two bright patches on either side.
★★★



Nuby Carry Case £10
The handle on our 'New and Improved!' case broke the first day! Still, the case is pretty robust and should keep your Game Boy safe and secure.
★★★



Nuby Play & Carry Case £10
Smart black pouch to keep Game Boy safe and clean.
★★★★★



Nuby Game Boy Magnifier £10
The lens isn't up to much and it's a bit feeble. Ours broke pretty early on, and is now all floppy.
★★



Four Player Adapter £30 (with F-1 Race)
Now you and three chums can plug into the latest four-player games such as F-1 Race and R.C. Pro-Am (both reviewed this issue: pages 62, 69). Superb fun!
★★★★★



Nuby Game Boy Amplifier £15
Amazingly powerful mini-amp. It distorts at high volume, but is great for annoying whole train-loads of people!
★★★★★



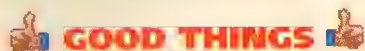
Nintendo Rechargeable Battery Pack/AC Adapter £20
The ideal partner for your portable chum. It provides up to 10 hours of charge for incredibly long journeys, but also doubles as a mains adapter!
★★★★★



Nuby Game Pak Carry Case £10
They say it carries a dozen game paks on the box – but this is a fib! We managed to squeeze 13 in easily! This little bag is the ideal thing to keep your games neat and tidy.
★★★★★

Review info

This is the important bit – the game reviews. Every review goes into a lot of detail on what each game is actually about. But if you want to know quickly what the good and bad points are, check the 'thumbs up' and 'thumbs down'. These will give you a good idea of the game's merits and any major faults that we've found. But that's not all...



GOOD THINGS

If we think there are any particularly nice features in the game we'll bung 'em in here



BAD THINGS

If there's anything outstandingly bad about the game then we'll jolly well say so here

... If you want the *full* low-down on the game, look at the TOTAL! ratings box. It breaks down and rates the looks, sounds, gameplay and life span of each game. The meters rate from 0 to 10. The more green squares, the better the rating. Of course, lots of red means bad news! Have a gander at the one below to see what we mean.

TOTAL!

Looks



■ What are the graphics like? Is it an oil painting in pixels, or doggie-doo in dots?

Sounds



■ Do you want to rush out and buy the 12" re-mix? Or just reach for the volume?

Gameplay



■ Good graphics and sound are nice, but this is what counts. How much fun is it?

Life span



■ What if you can finish it in a day? Great gameplay is no good without a long life.

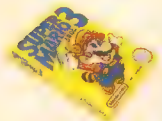
This is where me and Andy get to sum up. You can tell exactly what we think about a game just by reading this bit and looking at the rating!

Final rating
59
Percent

This month!

Super Mario Bros. 3

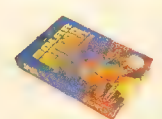
Page 12



Is this just the best NES game? Or the best game ever written?

Solar Jetman

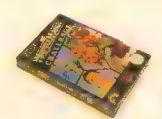
Page 16



This thrusty little space adventure is amazing. At last, a game with real inertia!

WWF Wrestle Mania

Page 19



Disappointing two-player simulation of this loony 'sport'.

Batman

Page 20



The caped crusader stars in this slick beat 'em up. It's a belter – no joking!

The Simpsons

Page 22



Help Bart save the earth from Space Mutants. Smart, funny, but dead weird!

Captain Skyhawk

Page 24



Superb visuals and hi-energy blasting in this classy shooter.

Goal!

Page 26



If you like football, you'll loathe this. Naff footy sim with funny sound effects.

Solstice

Page 28



Incredible 3D adventure game. Explore, cast spells but above all, enjoy!

Time Lord

Page 31



Battle aliens in different time zones! Sounds good, but it's pretty tedious.

Isolated Warrior

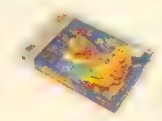
Page 32



Colourful alien-wasting shoot 'em up with an unusual twist.

Digger T. Rock

Page 34



Take Digger T. on a mining mission for precious minerals!

Top Gun 2

Page 36



Impossible mission more like! This air combat sim looks great but is hard!

Battle Of Olympus

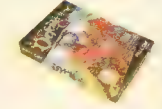
Page 38



Travel to ancient Greece to battle creatures and enter Hades!

Defender Of The Crown

Page 75



Odds bodkins! Verily, 'tis a knights-on-horseback type game!

Super Off Road

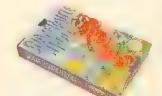
Page 76



Challenge 'Iron Man' Stewart to four-player 4x4 off-road racing.

Snake Rattle N Roll

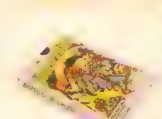
Page 46



Wonderful wriggling eat 'em up. Great graphics, rockin' sounds!

Boulder Dash

Page 48



This classic oldie puzzle game gets a new lease of life on the NES – and it's a hoot!

Gauntlet II

Page 50



The Tengen coin-op in all its glory. An astounding four-player monster mash!

Skate Or Die

Page 52



Five skateboard events, three good ones and half-an-hour's play. Oh dear...

Bubble Bobble

Page 54



It's getting on a bit, but this cute 'n' cuddly platform game is still brilliant fun!

TOTAL!

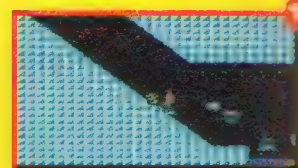
NES REVIEWS

Right again. Another door opens and this time it leads to a control room filled with lots of complex machines and computer wizardry. A third Turtle is engrossed in his calculations and doesn't even hear you enter. You tap him on the shoulder and he whirls round ready to attack. 'Oh, it's you,' he says, 'who am I then? I fight with sai which are three-bladed knives. Am I Raphael or am I Michelangelo?' Two down two to go. Waddya reckon? If you think he's Raphael turn to page 14. If you decide that his name is Michelangelo turn to page 33.

And this is only the beginning!

Here's a map of Grass Land (world number one), with pictures of all the things you're likely to meet. There are nine action scenes to complete plus lots of bonus screens. Let's take a scenic tour of this slice of Mushroom World...

- 1 A sideways one-armed bandit bonus screen where you line up the reels to earn goodies. Mushrooms mean extra Marios
- 2 Action scene 1. Nice and simple to get you into the swing of things
- 3 Action scene 2. A bit more grassy than the first one - and more dangerous too
- 4 Action scene 3. Looks like scene 1. Watch out for the sky-high bonus bit
- 5 Koopa flying ship. You have to wend your way through cannonballs a-plenty to reach and destroy Bowser's pesky kid
- 6 Toad's House. Open one of the three chests and whatever's inside is yours. You can get all sorts of useful power-ups here
- 7 Action scene 4. You're in mid-air here, so fall off a platform and it's doom city
- 8 The king's palace. Poor old kingy's feeling a bit ruff (and by the way he's scratching, he might have fleas, too)
- 9 Hey Hammer! Yep, that hammer-throwing turtle is back to block your way
- 10 Action scene 6. Moving platforms and weeny walkways make this a toughie!
- 11 Every 80,000 points this bonus screen appears. Pair up cards by remembering where they are. You win what they show
- 12 Action scene 5. Slippy, slidey, icy and underground. Another hidden bonus bit
- 13 Occasionally a phantom ship appears. Just climb on board for mega amounts of gold coins!
- 14 Boom-Boom's fortress. Bop him three times and Bowser's buddy will be beat!



SUPER MARIO BROS. 3



The wait is over. Here, at last, is the sequel to the sequel to the biggest-selling game of all time. Super Mario Bros. appeared in Japan way back in 1985 and has sold around 40 million units worldwide (if you put them all end-to-end they'd stretch over 5,000 miles, and if they fell on you, you'd get a really nasty bruise).

With such massive success under his belt, Mario went on to star in Super Mario Bros. 2. This sold the odd game pak or two (million), and paved the way for Mario's third adventure - which is easily

the best of the bunch (so far).

The dreaded Koopa King Bowser and his equally dreaded family are up to no good again. Bowser has sent his seven Koopa kids to each of

For NES (1-2 players)

From Nintendo

Price £40

the seven lands in Mushroom World. They've stolen the magic wands from the king of each land and changed the poor rulers into animals!

As you can imagine, the royalty of Mushroom



Here's our hero, looking decidedly un-hero like (and just a teensy bit teensy). What Mario needs is a good feed-up!



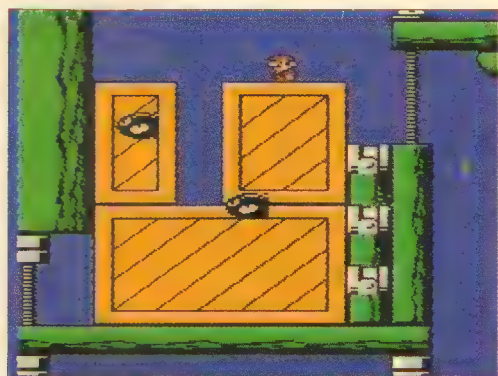
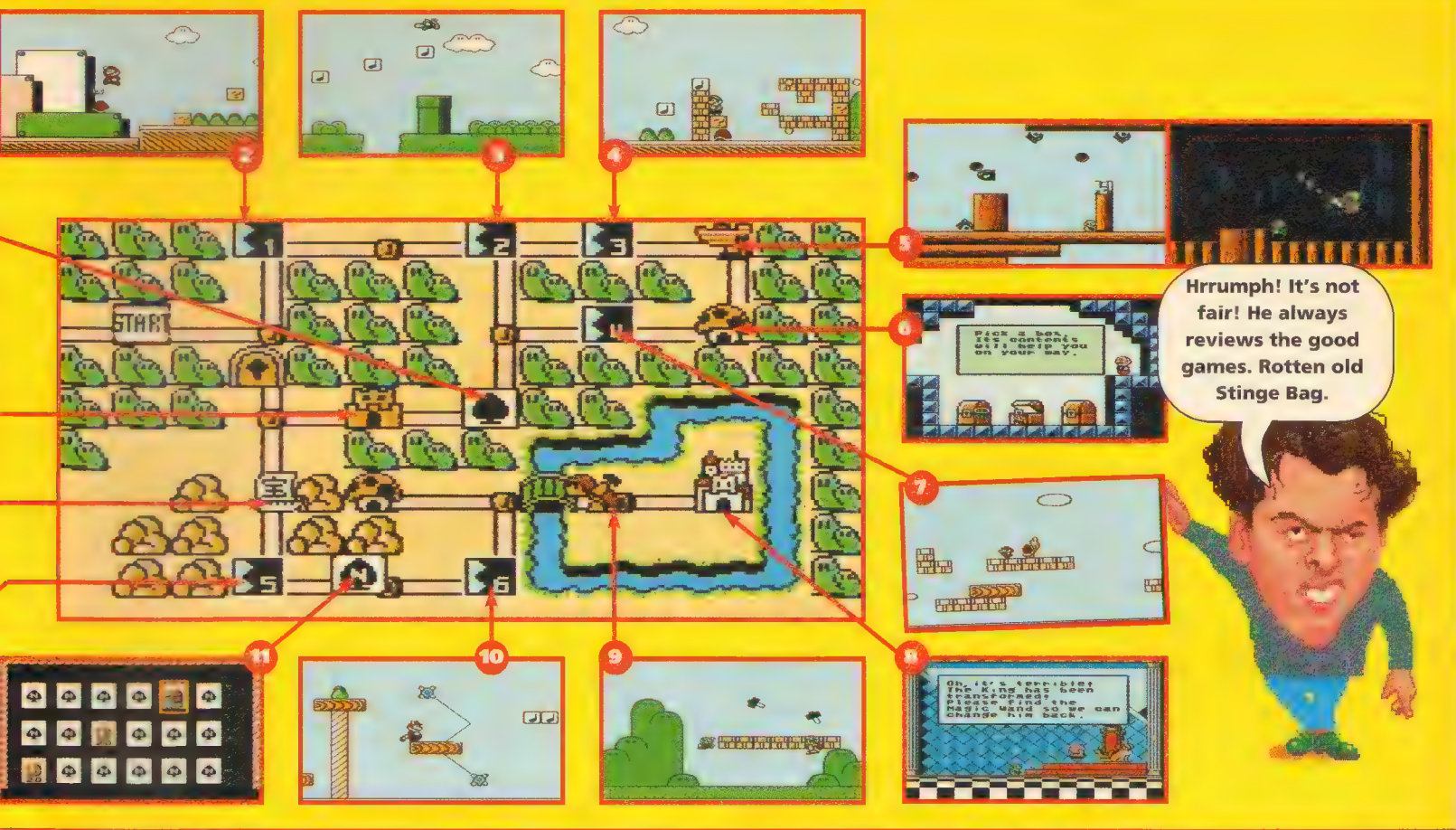
This should do the job! catch a Magic Mushroom and Mario turns into Super Mario! Now he can smash blocks with his head.



Then again, why stop there? Stomp on a flower and Super Mario turns Super Fiery. His lethal fireballs come in handy!



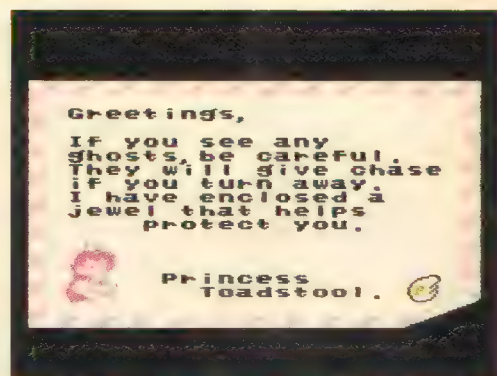
And if that sounds too hot, catch the Magic Leaf to change Super Mario into Raccoon Mario. Cute suit, but a killer tail!



At the end of each land Mario climbs on board the Koopa kid's airship, ready for the big battle against Bowser's 'orrible offspring. Quick! Hurry to the next piccy...



... Sorry, too slow. You missed all the action – Koopa's been bopped into oblivion. With the wand safely in Mario's hands, the king can be turned back into a hooman bean.



Princess Toadstool is so grateful for Mario's acts of bravery that she gives him a special gift for the next land. They can only be used once, so don't to be too hasty!

World aren't too chuffed at having extra legs and fur. Nosirree. But who can help? Who could possibly be crazy enough to want to face all eight of the Koopa clan? Yep, it looks like another job for the Super Mario Brothers!

Now I know it's a slim possibility but there just might be someone out there who doesn't actually know what this Super Mario business is all about. So here's the low-down: Mario and Luigi are small Italian plumbers with a taste for danger (and mushrooms). Their Koopa-clobbering quest is split into lots of scrolling levels (which means that the landscape moves across the screen, while Mario or Luigi stay more or less in the middle). To finish the level, all they need to do is reach the other end. But in between they have to contend with all

PLUMBERS
Take your pick! Playability, sound effects, animation, variety, hidden secrets, sub-games, two-player option, massive mission – it's total, man!

KOOPAS
It's a shame that they couldn't include a password option or battery back-up. It's a flippin' big game after all.
Er... Can't think of any more!

manner of enemies, traps and puzzles.

Most of the nasties can be defeated by jumping on their heads, but a lot more – like the missile-spitting Venus Fire Trap, for instance – just have to be avoided. (You can always jump on them and die but that's just plain stupid.)

Mario (like Luigi) has a few strange habits which help him on his quest, one of which is platform head-butting. Many of the blocks and platforms release special bonuses when Mario gives 'em a good nutting. If Mario can collect the

goodies before they whizz off screen he gains all sorts of abilities. He can become invincible, gain power to hurl fireballs and change his size and, erm, super costume.

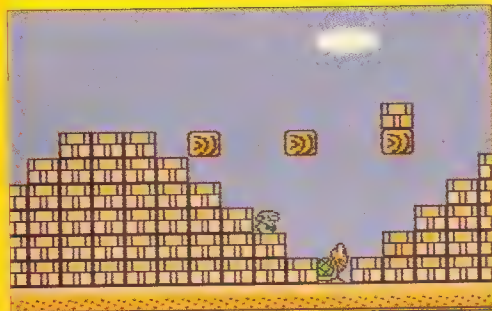
For example, the Super Mushroom changes Mario into Super Mario where he doubles in size and can smash blocks with his head (a bit like Thick Dyer). The Fire Flower turns him into Fire Mario allowing him to hurl fireballs. But weirdest of all is the Super Leaf which signals the entrance of Raccoon Mario, where Mario sprouts furry ears and a big stripy tail!

Unlike previous Mario adventures, SMB3 has a map of each land where you can choose which scene to play (sort of). If you're good enough, you can actually defeat Bowser's

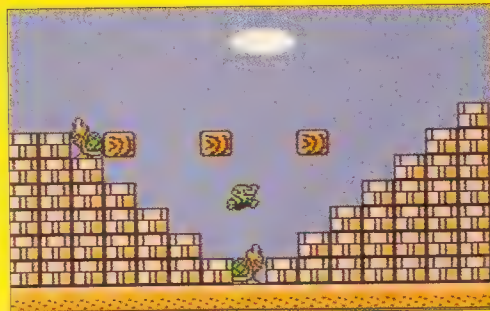
Smash 'n' grab

There are lots of ways to earn power-ups and extra lives. Metally-looking blocks often hide bonuses, and end-of-level goals also cough up the goodies!

TOTAL!
TACTIX



Wait until a Koopa turtle gets near some of the shiny, breakable blocks...



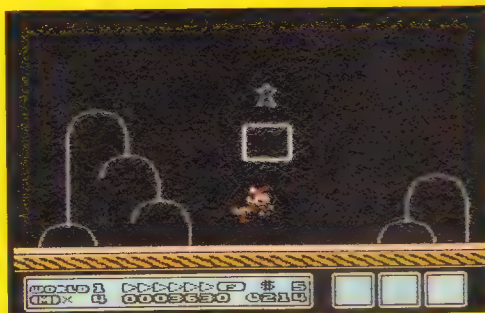
... Run and jump on him. You may have to kick or jump onto the shell to get it going...



... So be careful to get out of the way, while it smashes through the blocks!

At the end of every action scene, Mario can pick up a card by head-butting the goal. There are three types of card: Mushroom, Flower and Star cards.

A full set of three cards is swapped for extra lives. If Mario has three cards of different types he gets a single 1up. Three Mushrooms earns him a 2up; three Flowers gets a 3up; and three Stars means a whopping great five lives! To guarantee getting a Star card every time in Grass Land (world number one), just make sure Mario is running towards the goal at full speed!



Hold down button B and run like crazy! Nut the goal and Mario should get a star!



Do it three times on the trot and Mario is rewarded with five lives! Useful, huh?

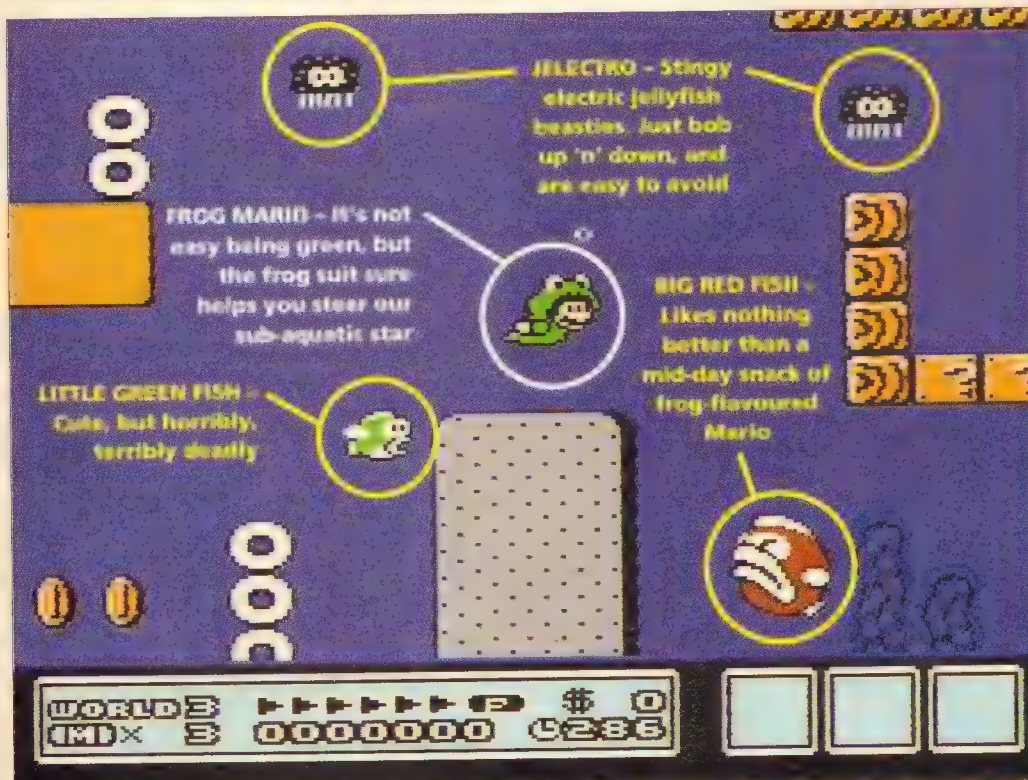
meddling kid and complete a land without finishing every action scene. This is a wonderful feature and really makes the game nice to play. If you get stuck, at least sometimes you have a choice of scenes to take a bash at.

In each land, as well as the scrolly action scenes,

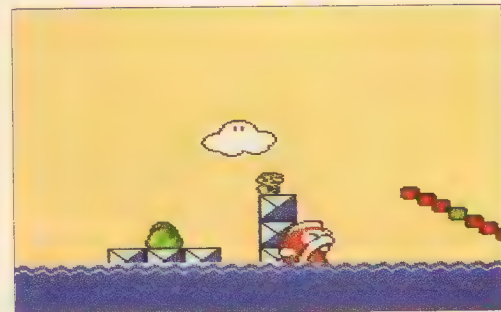
there are other places to visit. You must negotiate the mini-fortresses guarded by Boom-Boom and can visit Toad's House for a free gift. Then you'll have to pop in on the poor animal-monarch - but first you'll need to confront the Hammer Brothers who block the route to the king's castle! You can

even play the original Mario Bros. game which appears as a bonus level! Each location has something different to do, so there's loads of variety.

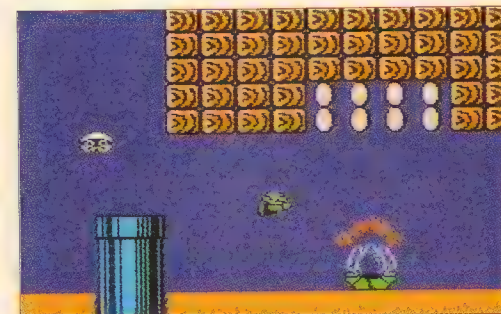
Another smart feature is the two-player game. With both Mario and Luigi on the case you get to play alternate action scenes, and can take it in



In Water Land (world three) Mario faces all manner of watery hazards, both above and below the waves. Mario can hold his breath for ages, but his swimming skills aren't that brilliant. Faced with a deep-sea scene like this, it's best to don the Frog Suit which is found at Toad's House.



This is too much hot water, even for a plumber! If that rotten great red fish doesn't swallow Luigi up, the rotatey platform can whizz him round and drop him in the drink!



Luigi comes face-to-petal with the dreaded Lava Lotus. This undersea shrubbery spits out life-losing lumps of lava, so 'leaf' it alone.

Don't make a splash

After much playing, dying, running out of time, screaming and playing again, here's the solution to the first Mini-Fortress in Water Land (world number three). When you enter the corridor (top strip) you are confronted by 'Boo' Diddly ghosts, Dry Bones zombie turtles, Thwomp the falling head and nine mysterious doorways.

Enter a doorway, and there's a good chance you'll plop into the water on the other side of the wall (bottom strip). To save you getting horribly confused, the coloured lines show where each doorway takes you. Blue lines end up in the drink, red lines take you to a bonus and the green line takes you to Boom-Boom who you must then defeat. The black lines show how the green pipes take you back to the start of the first corridor.



turns to have a go at the tougher bits. This is definitely one of the highlights of Super Mario Bros. 3 and I strongly suggest that you play with a chum (unfortunately, I only had Andy to play with).

But then again, it doesn't really matter how you play it, or what sort of games you like. Super

Mario Bros. 3 is utterly, utterly superb. The graphics and sound are brilliant and the size of the quest is mind-boggling (Andy remains boggled to this day).

If SMB3 got jammed in my NES and I could never play another game, I really wouldn't care. **STEVE**

TOTAL!



To reach all these mid-air bonuses in Desert Land (world two), you'll need the Magic Wing from that nice Princess Toadstool person.



Wooden platforms like this one can't be trusted. They fall off the end of rails and some of 'em plummet when stood on. Beware!

TOTAL!



Looks



■ Simple, but it's all wonderfully neat 'n' colourful. A very smart game indeed!

Sounds



■ Marvellous tunes and FX – and wait until you hear the spooky kettle drums!

Gameplay



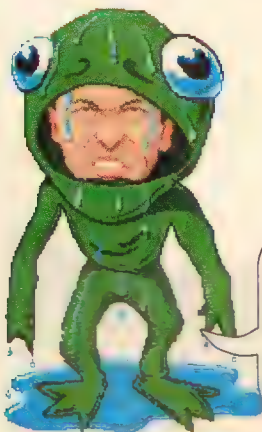
■ Almost perfect. Smooth control, heaps of variety, great two-player action. Wow!

Life Span



■ If only it had a save game thingy... Still, this Mario mission will last for months!

Totally stunning! Over the last few years I've played an awful lot of games on a lot of different machines – and this beats them all. What else can I say?



HAA HAAA! What a total twerp! (Pthpthf!) I only told him that I dropped 10p in the river the other day (snigger) and all I saw was this green blur!

Oh cheers! Laugh at me while I die of pneumonia why don't you. What a great pal you really are. (I think there's a fish in this pathetic suit somewhere.)



Final rating
98
Percent

Solar Jetman congratulates you and hands over a year's subscription to TOTAL! He also says 'About those Turtles. I know they tend to give you a tough time but they're basically decent chaps. Even if they do look like something that just crawled out of a toilet.' With that he gives you a friendly nod and jet-packs into the distance. A glowing door has appeared in front of you. You walk through the door with a subscription to TOTAL! in your carrier bag. Turn to page 81 to continue with your adventure.

Here, we've zoomed in on Solar Jetman's space pod for a better view. It looks like he's stuck in this crystal tunnel, but with the pod's shields on and a fair amount of wriggling, he can make it through to the other side. Let's hope it'll be worth his while...



SOLAR JETMAN

Golden Warpship – one of the most powerful vessels in his fleet. Well, it was before alien space pirates shipnapped it and broke it up into a dozen bits.

Individual parts of the Golden Warpship have been hidden in 12 alien worlds. Solar Jetman flies to each one in his mothership and then boards a

For NES (1 player)

From Nintendo/Rare

Price £30

Many moons ago a character by the name of Jetman appeared on the Sinclair Spectrum (a clonky old computery gadget). This loony spaceman starred in Jetpac – a neat little game by a team called Ultimate Play The Game. Jetpac sold squillions and was sequelled by Lunar Jetman. This sold even more squillions than the first one and Jetman became so famous they gave him his own comic strip!

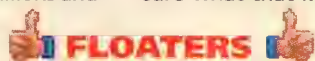
When Ultimate started writing games for the NES (under the

name of Rare) it was only a matter of time before they resurrected their loony spaceman – and three cheers all round 'cos now he's here!

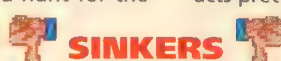
For his latest adventure, Jetman has been promoted to Solar Jetman (though I'm not really sure what that means) and is on a hunt for the

one-man jetpod in order to explore a regular rabbit warren of underground caverns. The jetpod has a single thruster and is controlled by rotating left or right, and pressing fire to thrust (a bit like that crusty old arcade machine Asteroids).

Your jetpod actually stays centered in the screen while the landscape slides around, but it acts pretty much as you'd expect a real ship to. It has inertia and momentum, and reacts realistically to the force of gravity. Jetpods are very responsive but flying one is a bit like carrying a shallow tea-tray full of water. Erm... well, anyway, it's very tricky.

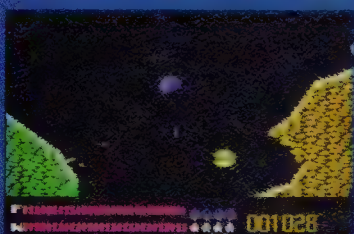


Massive, huge vast and really very big indeed. A single level can take hours to complete! Terrific presentation with in betweeny sequences

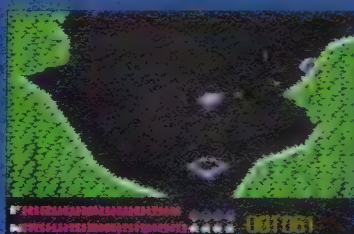


Later missions might be a bit too big for some gamers. Level two is tough – and it doesn't get better. Instructions don't really describe everything you'll meet

Level one – warp this way...



Right, to start off with we'd better get rid of those pesky gun emplacements – and watch out for those flippin' aliens, too. One touch and you'll be pod-less.



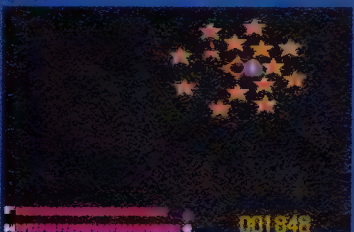
Ah-hah! I've found a thingummy to collect. Again, waste the alien gun and then tow that, er, whatsit back to your mothership. (I think it's a shield device.)



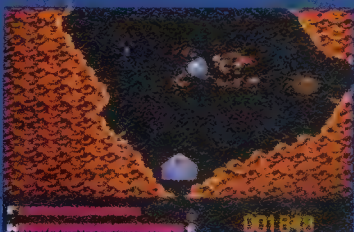
Now I've got shields I can go and collect the rest of the stuff without fear of being blasted into bits. This crystal (plus a few more) can earn you an extra pod.



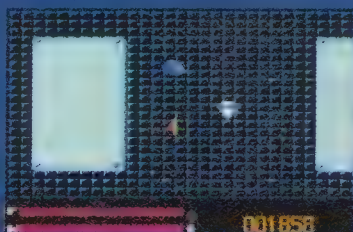
Uunnngh! This fuel is a bit on the heavy side. Still, I need to fill up the mothership so I can blast off (that's the fuel gauge – that brown meter on the front).



Ooh blimey! Looks like I've found some warpy-type device. Once the stars have gone (and I've stopped feeling sick) we'll see where I am...



Aah. This looks interesting. A hidden cave with a piece of the Golden (blue?) Warpship. Oh, and lots of enemy bullets which are hitting me. Oh dear.



With the piece of precious Warpship on board I've blasted off into the bonus level. I'm supposed to get 10 crystals in 10 seconds. Huh! Fat chance.



TOTAL! TACTIX And so we move on to planet number two (which is about ten times harder). If you fancy a bash, try using this code: KKBMKGGBKKGB. Good luck!



Not too sure about these two meters (better keep an eye on 'em anyway)

Number of ships and Jetmen remaining

Your score. Well it has lots of numbers and that's about it really

My go! My go!
My go! My go!
I WANT A GO!
NOW!!!

Your ship with its spiny shields turned on

Some sort of nuclear device. Better pick it up anyway, s'pose

An alien gun emplacement (closed up at the moment)

Oi Thick! Get out of the stupid screenshot. You always ruin everything. You blimmin' thick, weed... er... THICKY!

Current special weapon - you're packing the latest alien-duffing Multi-Warhead missiles

Drats! The completely stupid Dyer creature



When Solar Jetman and his jetpod approach anything that's pick-up-able the pod's tractor beam is activated. So useful items - like fuel and bits of shiny Warpship - can be towed back to base. Of course, having a ruddy great lump of intergalactic spacecruiser dangling from the jetpod makes it even more uncontrollable than it was before!

And then there's the aliens. As well as a wobbling jetpod, Jetman also has some vicious enemies to deal with! If the jetpod takes enough direct hits Jetman has three courses of action: 1) He can run away and head back to the mothership to refuel the pod. 2) He can put his shields up. This protects the pod but breaks the tractor beam,

dropping the goodies. 3) Ignore 1) and 2) and get blasted into bits. This sends debris all over the planet (breaking dozens of intergalactic pollution laws) and leaves our hero out in the open.

Stripped of his metal eggshell, Jetman has to rely on his jet-pack to get him back to the safety of his favourite armchair.

Pick 'em ups

Flying and exploring is all well and good, but you also get the chance to pick up huge wads of cash! Blast an alien and they leave behind a little box of money. And on later levels, there are alien artifacts (well, big boxes) left lying around. Drop 'em back at the mothership and you're told of their contents and value. More galactipennies in your Droyds bank account (sign of the black robohorse).

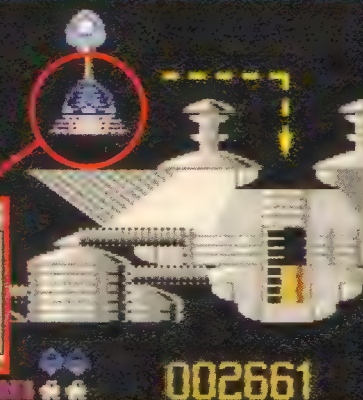
Here's a nice find: a large pink casket containing Easter Island Heads from another planet. A stonky 2,453 credits' worth!

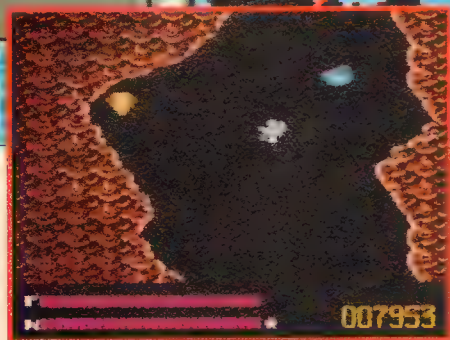


When you first start flying, you'll soon realise that your pod is a bit... well... rubbish. It doesn't even have a decent-sized engine. As you explore each planet you'll come across all manner of goodies left behind by other, less successful, space adventurers. Take these useful bits of hardware back to your mothership and they are fixed to your pods. This way you can gain boosters, shields, even a map!

Pick up this odd-looking gizmo, drop it into the mothership, and for ever more your pods have an extra boost of power!

YOU HAVE EQUIPPED YOUR PODS WITH BOOSTERS - SELECT AND B TO THRUST





Without going into boring details Solar Jetman (Hunt For The Golden Warship) is stuffed to the gills with things to do. There are heaps of objects to collect, oodles of baddies to blast and quite a few surprises along the way. And the underground playing area is absolutely massive! Each level takes ages to explore, let alone

The Mapping Device – When you have enough cash, treat yourself to this handy gadget. Without it you're going to get horribly lost (and this is only planet two!). The inset piccy shows where I am at the moment (in deep trouble – again.)

complete, but those nice chaps at Rare have provided a password option – you only need finish that first level once!

Solar Jetman is brilliant. The mission is so vast you could be at it for weeks, but then it's so incredibly playable you won't mind doing just that! **STEVE**



TOTAL!



Looks



■ Simple but dead smooth. The aliens are well animated and your ship moves nicely

Sounds



■ Heaps of eerie soundtracks and some great noises. Give your ears a treat!

Gameplay



■ Difficult later on, but the explore, shoot 'n' collect action is gripping stuff

Life span



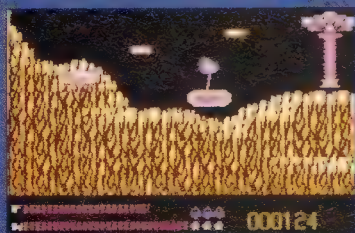
■ With 12 huge missions and a password system, this'll keep you busy for ages!



Hard to fault this game, really. It's technically stunning, incredibly playable and more polished than your mom's silver. Buy and enjoy!

Final rating
92
Percent

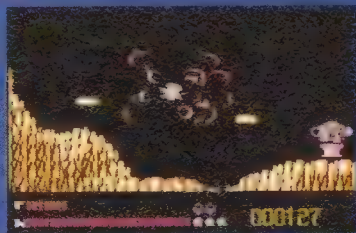
Whoops!



Ok blimey! It's one of those large and unfriendly blasty gun-type things. OK, if I can just get this stupid ship back under control everything will be fine.



I don't like going out much anyway, the planet's got no atmosphere, none of the locals like me. I'm gonna stay in and watch the 3D-telly.



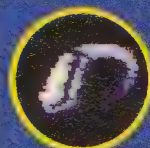
Nnnngh! Drat! Drat! Drat! This stupid ship with its rubbishy ship shape and silly vegetable-like turning abilities. That's it. I'm going home!



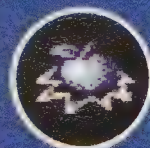
What! You mean I get another spaceship? For nothin'? Just for coming back alive? Brill... Um, hold on a sec'. Does that mean I've got to go back out there?

Ship shop

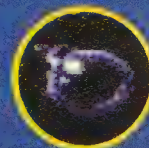
In between planets you get to pop into your local branch of the Interstellar Marketing Co. Lets' take a look at what's on offer...



Homing missiles
Missiles which go home (I think)



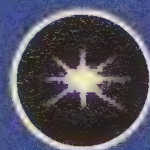
Anti-gravity
Er... Looks like it kills apples



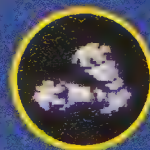
Smart Bomb
Kills all baddies on screen



Time Bomb
Goes off after a few seconds



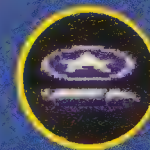
Star Bullets
Bullet-shooting bullets



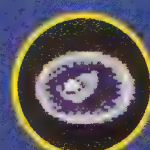
Multi-warheads
Missiles which split up into bits



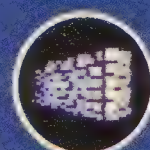
Titanium Bullets
Bullets which are really hard



Military Bullets
Bullets which are also really hard



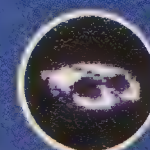
Super Shields
Better than the non-super ones



Momentum Killer
Improved braking capabilities



Efficient Engine
More miles per gallon



Super Thrusters
Doubles engine oomph

WWF

WRESTLE MANIA CHALLENGE

For NES (1-2 players)

From LJN Ltd/Rare

Price £35



The guys. There's you, berk, nerd, idiot, fool, dweeb, twonk, flongy, and gimp. Sad isn't it?

What have Hulk Hogan, Randy Savage, André The Giant, Jim Duggan, Big Boss Man, Rick Rude, Brutus Beefcake and The Ultimate Warrior got in common? They're massive, hugely strong and, if this game is anything to go by, they're hopeless at wrestling. I finished this game on my second go so unless you're a WWF maniac I suggest you turn the page and take a gander at Batman instead.

Anyone still with me? Ah, just the one. Well, you know things are going to be bad when you first see the tacky packaging. The 70's-style box is festooned with images of loony wrestlers in outfits more appropriate to a production of Alladin than to grown men who should know better.

There are plenty of play options but they're all too easy or too dull. You can take part in the

championship where you fight each of the above wrestlers in turn. Defeat them all and you've done it. I'm far from perfect when it comes to playing games so if I managed to win the WWF crown in a matter of hours then you won't have much trouble either. Even the worst gamer is going to grapple his way to the top in a couple of days at most.

If you want a bit of practice you can play individual matches against any of the wrestlers. The only gamer who's likely to need it though is the one who's accidentally put his 'Death Bringer' balaclava on back to front.

Next up is the two player option. Playing head-to-head with a friend holds the most challenge but even this gets tiresome after a few matches. Alternatively, if you're both bad losers try the two-



The wrestling moves are pretty neat. Seven different play options, including one-on-one and tag-team



Provides a day's play at most. Very poor - even playing with a friend gets dull and repetitive.

player tag option in which you team up against the other wrestlers. This is even easier again.

If two real fans of the sport want to play head-to-head then this may have some appeal. But even then is it really worth it? I don't think so. **ANDY**

TOTAL!

TOTAL!



Looks [Progress bar: 10 green squares, 1 red square]

■ The background never changes but the wrestling moves are a hoot to watch

Sounds [Progress bar: 10 green squares, 1 red square]

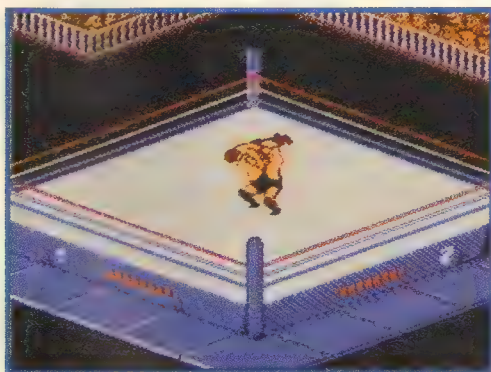
■ A few funky tunes, but the sound effects are pretty appalling.

Gameplay [Progress bar: 10 green squares, 1 red square]

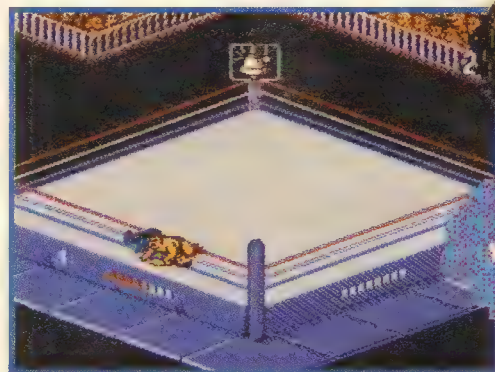
■ It's far too easy and once you've tried the moves a few times it gets very dull

Life span [Progress bar: 10 red squares]

■ About the same life span as a pint of milk left in the sun. It'll last a day at most



André the giant doesn't take kindly to being told that leotards are for girlsies. I dunno, these fat blokes can be so tetchy!

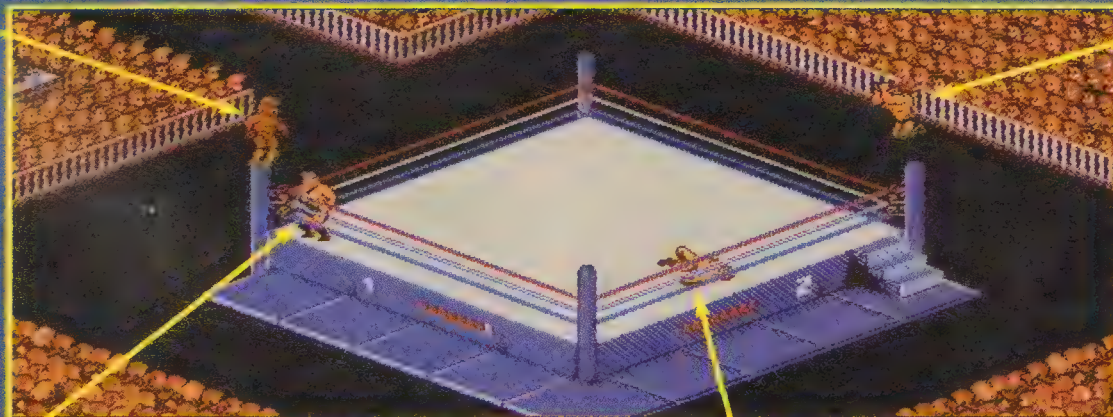


If all else fails, try the 'causing your opponent to faint by shoving your smelly armpits under his nose' move.

The graphics are good and the wrestling moves are actually quite impressive. But at the end of the day, it's neither challenging Nor very exciting

Final rating
37
Percent

What a nonce. A grown man like Hulk Hogan is scared of a 7' 4" loony weighing in at a paltry 520lbs. Er, come to think of it, I'd be up the corner post like a shot as well if I were in his boots. Which I'm not, so ha!



This man shouldn't technically be in the ring at all. He is, however, a rather big fellow. So the the referee has not only allowed him to carry on but has also scarpered.

Ah. This is the character you control and he seems to be a bit, well... He's either very poorly or, and this is a much safer bet, completely and utterly dead.

This is one of the opposing team. He has obviously sensed the sorry predicament of the character on the floor and, in true sportsman-like fashion, is about to land on on him from a great height... Elbows first.

This room is empty but for a large glass cabinet (about the size of a telephone box) in the middle of the floor. It has a glass door which has engraved upon it the word 'Transporter'. There are no switches, dials or other controls so you remove one of your socks, open the door and throw it in to see what happens. There's a blinding flash and the sock disappears. If you pluck up enough courage to step inside the transporter turn to page 7. If you decide to play safe and go back through the westerly exit (chicken) then turn to page 13.

BATMAN

For NES (1 player)
Price £40

From Sunsoft



Batman
Or Bruce Wayne in a rubber suit



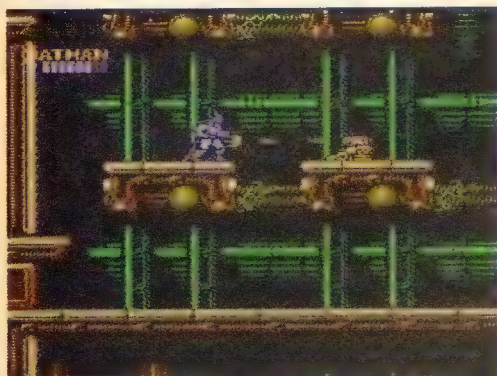
The Joker
Or Jack Napier the grinning buffoon



Vicki Vale
Or er, um... Ms Victoria Vale

GO AWAY! You aren't Robin you mad fool. I'm warning you - I'll throw another Batarang!

Aaww! Pleeeeeze can I have another go! Go on! Just one more go in the car. I'll be more careful, honest! Look, I'm sorry about the dent and I won't touch the passenger eject button when you're in the other seat this time, honest! (Bah! Miserable old geek!)



Beware the dreaded belly-tickler. If Batty doesn't dispose of this fiend quickly he'll end up laughing himself to death. Well, sort of.



Down in the sewers lurk all sorts of terrors. Even if you survive the flame throwers, there's still the damp-rubber rash to cope with.

Welcome to the game of the film of the book of the series of the other series of the comic. It's based upon the midnight wanderings of the character from the... erm... comic book.

Gotham city is celebrating its 200th Anniversary. But the Joker is a bit of a party-pooper and his army of criminals have brought the city to its knees. Unless someone can defeat this grinning buffoon, there'll be no partying down Gotham way this week.

Time for a bit of crime fighting then. You control Batman and must guide him through five

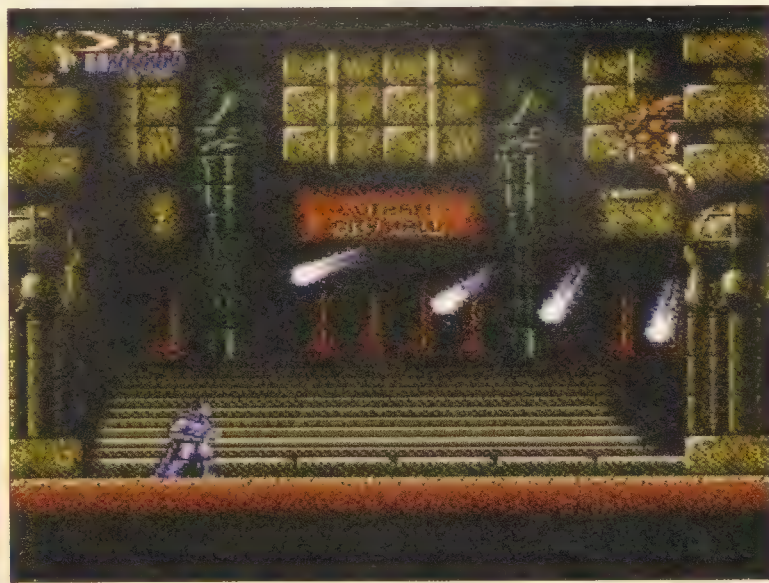
levels to reach the final showdown with The Joker atop the City Cathedral.

For a start it's a platform game. And no we don't mean it features overly tall shoes from the seventies. We mean that the levels are made up of platforms (walkways, blocks, pipes and stuff) that the Bat Freak can walk along, jump onto and generally do his batty business around.

For a so-called superhero it must be said that when Batman starts his mission, he's a bit on the weedy side. He has a strong punch but then again, so do Stevie J's socks (and I certainly wouldn't suggest that they became Dark Knight detectives!).



Batman is just sooo controllable. Graphics are dark 'n' sinister just like they should be. Loads of massive levels



Outside Gotham City Hall you get to meet end-of-level guardian number one. He's got a hover-pack, a silly red costume and a bad attitude!

Holy hardware Batman!

TOTAL!
TACTIX

Most platform games have end-of-level monsters, or at least vaguely humanoid opponents. In Batman, you have to contend

with vast rooms full of deadly machinery like this one from level two. If you get to this point with anything less than full

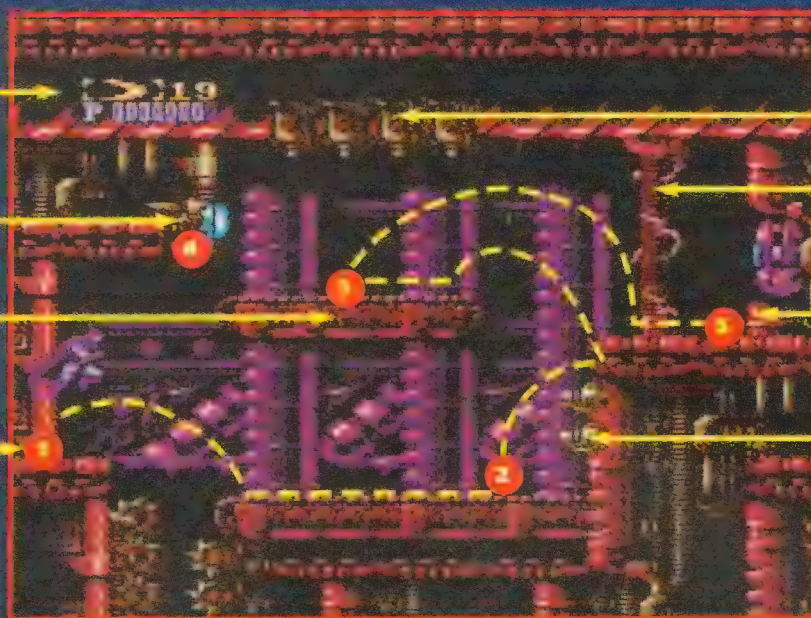
energy you're doomed. The objects in the room need to be destroyed in a certain order for you to carry on. Here's how...

This shows the currently selected weapon, how much ammo you have left and remaining energy

4 Batarang this electronic eye to deactivate the force field on the far right

3 Jump off the wall and onto this conveyor belt. Avoid the laser bolts from above and stay right(ish)

1 Batman starts here. Move onto the conveyor belt and jump to avoid the gunfire from the right



Randomly firing laser turrets. Just watch out!

Electrified barrier which guards the purple eye thingy. It's deadly to the touch so keep away!

5 To finish this eye off, crouch here. Wait for it to fire, then jump up and punch its lights out!

2 Move across and punch these guns out (bottom one first). It's tricky but it saves your weapon power for the bigger baddies



BATWEAPONS Apart from his fists, Batman has three weapons at his disposal. The Batarang is a boomerang, the Spear Gun fires a rocket(?) and the Dirk is a spinning four-pointed blade.

Fortunately when you kill opponents they often leave behind a useful item for the Batperson to collect. He can replenish his energy, gain extra lives and top up the ammo supply which feeds his three Bat-weapons: Batarang, Spear Gun and Dirk. Each one uses up a different amount of ammo so weapon choice is important.

Each level is made up of three platform sections followed by a single-screen encounter with an



Here's a close up of the action on level three. The bicep-flexing Batman has, unfortunately, failed to notice impending doom from above!

CRIMINALS
Patchy gameplay with easy bits followed by very tricky sections. No password option means you always start from the beginning

end-of-level Boss. All of the platform stages are played in a similar way but this doesn't make the game repetitive. Later levels have different bad guys and puzzle elements, so there's no real danger of getting bored.

However, there is a danger of becoming very dead at the hands of the many enemies. There are 15 different baddies spread thickly throughout the five levels. These range from the weedy and oddly-named 'Shakedown' men (who just blindly run into you), to such horrors as exploding spiky droids, rock-hard Ninja and jet-packing psychopaths.

And if these don't make your latex tights a bit damp, wait until you reach the end of the level! Some Bosses are nasty humanoids but others consist of offensive bits of machinery that need to be destroyed in a specific order before the caped guy can continue.

There's a huge amount of detail in the game and I could wibble on about it for hours. Instead I'll merely say that whether you're a Batfan or not, the atmospheric graphics, great gameplay and the challenge of 20 different sections make this a real treat. You would be Batty to miss out on this. **ANDY**

TOTAL!

Looks

■ This game looks gorgeous. The backdrops are dark and very atmospheric

Sounds

■ Not the best aspect of the game - fairly average theme tunes and effects

Gameplay

■ Batman is really controllable, the action fast and unrelenting. Exciting stuff!

Life span

■ Plenty to do, but samey gameplay will eventually kill your interest

There's nothing really original about this game but who cares when it plays so well? Each level is long with some ingenious and tricky end-of-level challenges. Basically a great game!

Final rating
81
Percent

THE SIMPSONS

BART VS. THE SPACE MUTANTS

For NES (1 player)

From Acclaim

Price £40

Man, is this planet in deep, deep trouble? For one thing, Space Mutants are taking over. And for another, the only people able to do anything about it are Bart Simpson and family. Let's face it, we're doomed...

The site of this extraterrestrial invasion is Bart's home town of sunny Springfield. Now the Space Mutants intend capturing the planet by creating the 'Ultimate Weapon', and they've brought along a special machine to do just that. So what raw material do you think it uses to make such an awesome device? Nuclear waste perhaps? Anti-matter from another Universe maybe? No. Purple-coloured objects. Everyday,

household items coloured purple, like flowerpots or toys or signs or birds.

Obviously this makes Bart's job of protecting the entire planet a bit easier. All he has to do is scurry round Springfield and get rid of all the purple things by spraying them, breaking them, covering them up, whatever.

The stationary objects are a doddle – a few squirts of Bart's Brand X paint spray and they're

turned red. But just how is he going to get rid of that purple bird in the pet shop? And what about that big purple sign above the bowling alley?

There are a couple of shops in Springfield that sell useful items such as magnets, whistles, rockets (the bonfire night variety), wrenches and so on. Bart has a couple of pennies on him (and can collect some along the way), so buying the stuff is no problem. The tricky bit is finding a good use to

put them to. A few of these puzzles are obvious but to get rid of all the purple stuff, Bart is going to have to experiment.

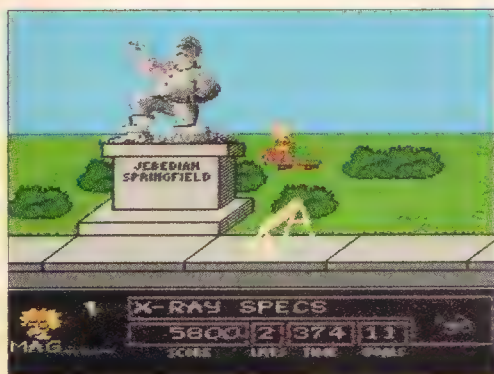
As he makes his way through town, Bart passes the other inhabitants of Springfield

X-RAY SPECS

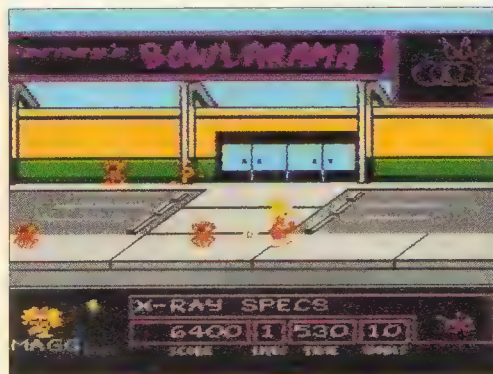
Brilliant intro sequence!
Sampled Bart-speech is cool and the soundtrack is groovy.
Scenery and characters are very nicely drawn

MUTANTS

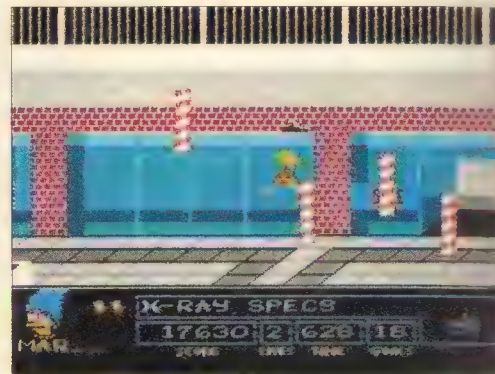
Levels go on a bit. It would be better to have more, shorter ones or a password system.
Some of the platform jumps are too darn tricky!



Foolishly ignoring the purple bird snoozing on Jebediah Springfield, Bart leaps onto his skateboard for some sidewalk slalom practise. As Bart zooms along he has to avoid dogs, aliens and the local bully, Nelson.



Having survived the skateboarding section, Bart is now pondering how to get rid of that flippin' great purple neon sign. Those red aliens just bob up and down, but Bart has to scurry past quickly or get blatted.



In the shopping mall on level two, Bart finds himself leaping between the demon barber shop poles of doom. Having foiled the Space Mutants' purple plan, Bart now has to track down all the hats he can find!

Bashing the body-snatchers



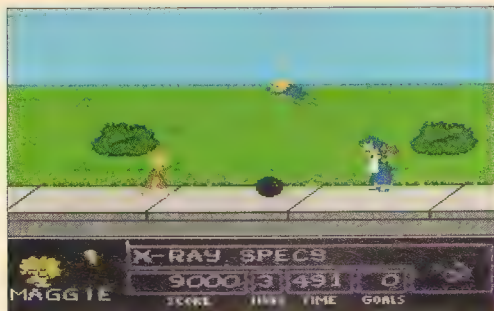
Springfield is suffering from a bad case of the body-snatchers, as Space Mutants take over the minds of the locals. To see if this chap is carrying an unwelcome guest, get Bart to put on his X-ray specs.



The screen switches to X-ray vision and lo and behold! Those dangly tentacles give it away – either this guy has got a pretty rad haircut, or his head is home sweet home to a Mutie! The only way to save him...



is to jump on his head. The startled alien flies off dropping a token which adds a letter to Maggie's name. Once all six are in place, Bart can rely on her to help him defeat the end-of-level guardian.



At the end of level one, Bart faces his arch-enemy Nelson in a bowling ball vs water balloon duel! Maggie helps by dropping the bowling balls for Bart to headbutt (ooww!).

Unfortunately, some of the occupants of Springfield are occupied themselves! Space Mutants are at large and Bart is the only one who can spot them, thanks to his X-ray specs. Whenever someone walks into view, he can check whether the person in question is as human as they look, because under Bart's X-ray vision alien-infested people show up as silhouettes with dangly antennae sticking out of their skulls. If Bart jumps on their heads the alarmed alien flies away, leaving a normal human being behind plus a token thingy.

Getting rid of the alien increases Bart's score and collecting the token thingy acts as proof that the aliens have actually landed. If Bart collects enough proof one of his family helps him against the end-of-level guardian. These are usually one of Bart's arch-enemies, such as Nelson (Springfield's biggest bully) at the end of level one.

As long as Bart survives this encounter he moves onto the next level, the shopping mall. And since



all the purple objects are nowhere to be seen the aliens have been forced forced to modify their machine. Now Bart has to keep an eye out for hats... Weird, man.

I like Bart Simpson Vs The Space Mutants a lot. It looks smart, has a brilliant sense of humour and sounds well impressive. Every time you die Bart clearly says, 'Eat my shorts!'.

I'm a bit worried about how hard it is, though. The puzzles aren't too difficult to suss out but level one is really long and there are plenty of chances to lose lives. Then when the game ends you always have to start again right from the beginning, which is a real drag. A continue option or password system would have been much better.

Nevertheless, If you can play level one over and over again without having a cow, then you'll probably enjoy The Simpsons more than I do! **STEVE**

Looks

■ Very cartoony, but some of the sprites are a bit weak. Loads of colour though

Sounds

■ Superb version of The Simpsons soundtrack and some excellent sampled speech!

Gameplay

■ Odd puzzles and tricky action make it both challenging and frustrating

Life span

■ Five big levels, but you might get sick of playing through the first ones over again

If it wasn't for the lack of a password system, Bart and family would have been kicking around the 90s. Still, this is a real smart game and no mistake!

Final rating
81
Percent

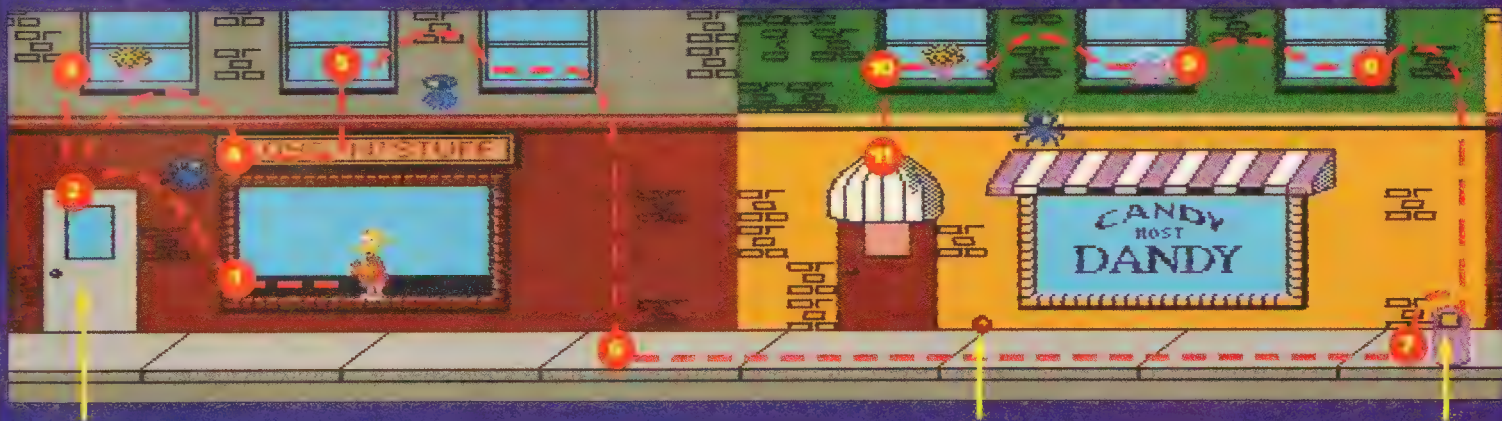
Painting the town red

To give you an idea of how Bart foils the Space Mutants, we've joined two screens together to show some puzzles from the first level. One of the trickier tasks is spraying the purple plant pots on the first storey window ledges, but follow our advice and you won't go far wrong!

1 Run along the window ledge and jump onto the top edge of the door panel at **2** (it's best to jump over the first blue

zebloid rather than beneath him). Jump straight up and at **3** spray the purple plant pot in the window above. Jump across onto the top window ledge (again avoiding the zebloid) to land at **4**. Move across and then jump up onto the small window ledge **5** in the centre. Leap over the second blue zebloid, land on the next window ledge and then drop down to the pavement at **6**. Walk past the red ball and

go and spray the trash can **7**. Jump onto the trash can for an extra big bounce up onto the top window ledge **8**. Hop across onto the centre ledge **9** and walk into the paint pot, spilling paint onto the purple canopy below. Leap over the third blue zebloid and slowly walk to the very edge of the platform at **10**. Drop onto the canopy at **11**, move right slightly, then jump up and spray the last plant pot. Yo!



Bart can enter shops to buy useful items. Toys 'n' Stuff sell whistles and magnets.

A small red ball (dunno what it's for, though!)

Trash cans can be used for extra-high jumps!

You are in a square room. There's a slightly unpleasant smell invading your nostrils - a bit like those vile mashed carrots your mother serves up with the Sunday lunch. The walls are a pale shade of orange and the only source of light is from a sickly orange lamp in the corner of the room. There's also a large letter 'E' painted on the floor. There are two exits from the room. One that leads north and one that leads south. Do you choose the northern exit by turning to page 55, or do you prefer to take the southern exit by turning to page 5?

CAPTAIN SKYHAWK

For **NES (1 player)**

From **Nintendo/Rare**

Price **£25**

Colonel: Skyhawk! Ready for the big push?
CS: Sort of Sir. Just one or two questions?
Colonel: Fire away!

CS: These aliens that are threatening to vapourise the earth sir. They present the biggest threat this planet has ever faced, am I right?

Colonel: Bang on, Skyhawk.

CS: And correct me if I'm wrong but aren't I just a small part of a large airborne defence unit?

Colonel: Quite so Skyhawk, quite so.

CS: Then why are you sending only me against a whole race of hostile alien attackers?

Colonel: Because I'm as mad as a fruitbat Skyhawk.

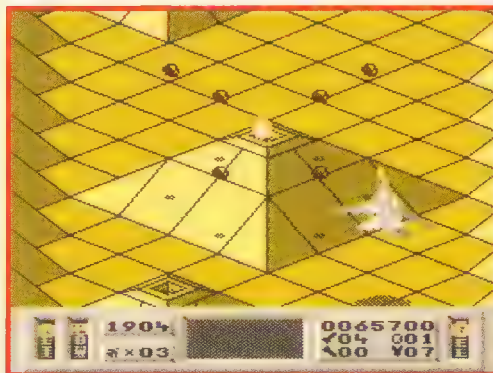
CS: Permission to faint Sir?

Colonel: Granted.

CS: THUD!

Yes, once again it's you against the Universe, as you pilot your F-14VTS jet fighter through nine, three-stage missions to save the earth from aliens.

Each mission starts with a mountainous backdrop that moves from the top of the screen to the bottom. As you steer your jet left and right, the screen also



What do you get if you cross an Egyptian pyramid with a volcano? Well, something that doesn't like you, that's for sure!



Oh dear. Who left the bath tap running, then, and flooded the place? Those little toy boats shoot back, so watch out!

slides sideways to reveal more of the terrain. Pushing backwards and forwards adjusts the pitch and altitude of the plane, to 1) avoid any sticky-up

bits, and 2) allow you to target missiles and bombs.

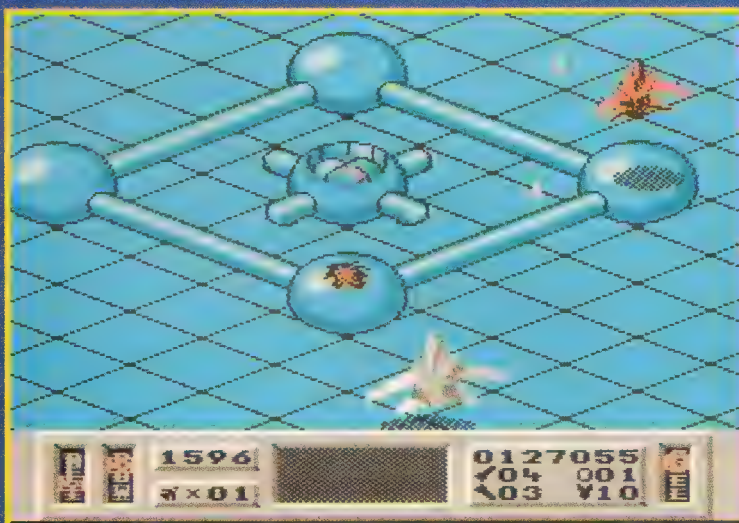
The background graphics are gorgeous, but there's little time to enjoy them: if the ground-based gun emplacements don't

put the wind up you, the enemy fighters might. Or perhaps the hostile ships in the water sections will throw you off

VICTORY ROLLS
The levels are hu-u-uge.
Three very different types of gameplay in each mission

DEFEAT BUNS
Controls are tricky to start with.
Additional weapons are far too easy to come by

Surprise, supplies!



There are four enemy bases to blow up, which all look much the same but get harder to destroy as you progress. All you have to do is shoot the spherical bits (top, bottom, left and right) until a hole appears in each. Do the same for that dome in the middle and the whole lot explodes. It sounds easy but the dome and spheres all fire at you as you pass in front of them. Just keep dodging from side to side and hammer that fire button!



Some of the missions are a little trickier, though. In level two you have to drop supplies to people who live in strange holes in the ground (your relatives? - SJ). There are two drop-off points in the level so if you miss one you have to keep going until you cycle back to the start again. When you see a hole like the one above, release your payload by pressing button B. Accurate timing is important because the supplies take a while to reach the ground.



There are four different weapons to choose from. Both the AIM-54s and the Mavericks are good for dogfights, the cannons, er, cannon things and um, those others, er...

guard. Then again... Well, I think you get the idea.

Yes indeed, these levels look good, play good and, to be honest, would make a pretty good game on their own. But remember I said there are three stages to each mission.

After you've cleared the mountainous section, the gameplay changes to a sort of After Burner affair. Here you try to shoot down fighters as they come out of the screen towards you.

When you play the first of these sections there's little return fire, but in later levels the enemy close in from all directions and start firing heat-seeking missiles! A direct hit causes your bottom to smoke furiously as you plummet earthward. It's important to do well in this section for reasons that will be explained in 65 words' time.

At this point, Skyhawk gets naffed off with alien-bashing and returns to his local orbiting space station to arm up for the next level. The docking



... Anyway, once you've decided what you want to buy, the screen switches to this arming sequence which tells you how much of everything you can carry (fill her up!).

sequence is the third and final section of each mission and involves lining up your plane with the hatch on the rotating station. Time it wrongly and the space station gets a lovely new coat of metallic Skyhawk.

With the money earned during the dogfight section you can now visit the armoury and stock up on weapons. One slight criticism here is that you often earn enough cash to buy all the weapons on offer, making the game easier than it should be.

Captain Skyhawk's controls seem a bit daunting at first, especially the ability (or inability in my case) to control altitude. However, they don't take long to master, and you soon begin to enjoy this rapid and hugely playable shoot 'em up. Smart graphics and lots of variety make this a definite target for your Chrimble cash.

ANDY

TOTAL!

Looks ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ Hugely colourful. The 3D sections look great and the others are also impressive

Sounds ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ Great! Brilliant effects like the varying jet sound when you change altitude

Gameplay ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ The action is varied, exciting, fast and very compulsive. Good controls too.

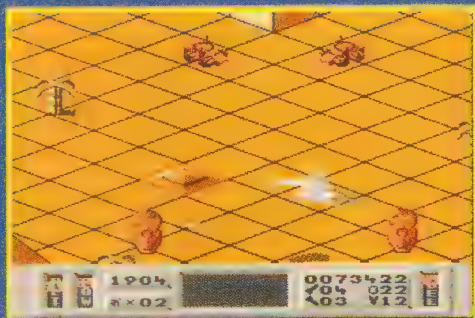
Life span ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ Each level is long, with three different stages, but it won't take long to master

Incredibly snazzy graphics, three different types of gameplay, fast-paced action and beautiful presentation. A spiffingly good blast 'em up

Final rating
83
Percent

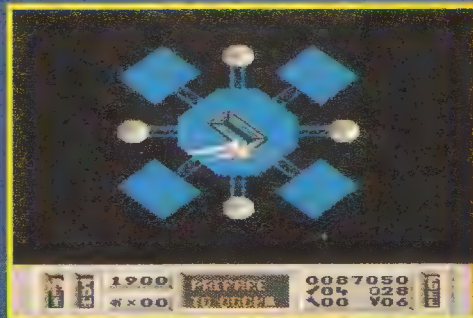
A game of three halves!?



1 Missions - Each level is made up of three stages, the first of which is the main mission. There are three different types of mission which are: Destroy Enemy Bases (easy peasy!), Drop Supplies (average baverage) and Rescue Hostages (difficult schmifficult). Get through unscathed and this little picture below signals your entrance into the next stage.



2 Chocks away - Having survived the low-level combat it's time to reach for the skies. Enemy planes zoom in and out of the screen in quite convincing 3D. It's important to do well in this, though, because it has a direct effect on how much dosh you can spend on weapons after you've docked with the space station. Speaking of which...



3 Left a bit, right a bit... Crunch! - How do you get a jet fighter into space? Well, that remains a mystery, but once it's there you may as well visit the space station. Docking is easy: just line yourself up with the rotating hatch then press button B to start your entry. Visit the armoury, tool up, and blast off on the next mission!



GOAL!

For NES (1-2 players)

From Jaleco

Price £40

Outrageous. This football game is set in America, where the sun's always shining, there are huge crowds and shapely cheerleaders do their rather pleasant 'thing' when you win. It's not right. What happened to good old British football with sudden downpours, capacity crowds of two hundred or so and a warty old woman who brings on the hot dogs at half time? Mmm... Maybe it's not so bad after all.

There are five main play options available. Once you've decided whether to play on your own or against another human being (assuming you know one) you can choose to play in the World Cup, in a Tournament, or in the Shoot competition.

The World Cup competition is split into two bits, one easy, one difficult. The easy bit is choosing



During play, you see the pitch from a weird, almost-directly-overhead-but-at-a-funny-angle sort of viewpoint. Maybe you're watching from the Goodyear blimp.



Hold on ref, is that allowed? That red blokey is walking all over my star player to get the ball. Foul! Foul graphics, foul gameplay, foul sound... Red cards all round methinks.

which country's team you want to control. The difficult bit is then pulling off the impossible by getting through to (and winning) the final.

The Tournament consist solely of American teams (what American teams!?) taking part in a knockout competition. Lose a game and you're out of the running, simple as that.

And finally, the shooting competition is really just a practise mode for sharpening up your dribbling and shooting skills. It's you versus two defenders in a set-piece play. All you have to do is weave your way through the opposition, Peter Beardsley-style, and get the ball past the goalie. Easy? Er... Not for me it isn't. Still, I am to football what Peter Beardsley is to public speaking.

Playing a match is riddled with annoying problems. A little arrow appears beneath the player you are currently controlling. If another player gets nearer the ball, the arrow switches to that player so you have a chance of tackling the opposition.

Well, that's the idea. Sometimes your poor NES throws a wobbler and can't decide which player to put the arrow under and you're left trying to work out exactly who you're controlling.

There is a way of changing the player yourself but this often selects a player further from the ball than the first one! Glen Hoddle, eat your heart out.

Another problem is the seemingly brainless team mates you have to play with. They're pretty good at positioning themselves to receive a pass from you, but when they have the ball they really don't have a clue. What with that and the feeling of playing against an electronic opponent that knows something you don't, the games are frustrating rather than exciting.

The pitch scrolls smoothly enough, but when there's a lot of action on-screen every-

thing slows down horribly. Also the players flicker like crazy, causing more confusion.

NES-owning footy fans who were disappointed by Nintendo World Cup will, sadly, find nothing here to make up for it. Your best bet is to hold on for a few months until we review the near-legendary Kick Off when it enters the NES stadium. **ANDY**

TOTAL!



Looks



■ Pitch moves smoothly – which is more than can be said for the glitchy players

Sounds



■ Well, if you think running players go GRUNCH! GRUNCH! you'll like the effects

Gameplay



■ Slow, confusing, annoying, unfair, unrealistic – do you want me to go on?

Life span



■ GOAL! was as sick as a parrot when we first played it. Now it's on the critical list

WAH! Flickery graphics, random player-switching and opponents with glue on their boots. Everything you never wanted from a football game.

Final rating
39
Percent

Three men and a ball



Here's your choice of strikers for the shooting competition. There's Hansen, Roko and the rather dashing handsome star player who won his first England cap at the age of 12. (Get it off NOW! – Steve.)



Humph! I had to choose Juarez in the end and now I'm getting slaughtered by their defence. See, if I'd picked that other player I'd have been 24 goals up by now! Pthpth! Never did like the game anyway.

THE TOTAL! ADVENTURE COMPO

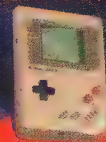


Aaagh! We're giving
THREE Game Boys away!
Can't we give one away
and keep the others for
ourselves. Go on, Steve!



Maybe we
could give you
away instead

Win a
Game Boy



THAT'S
WHAT THESE
SIDE THINGIES
ARE!

It was a meeting much like any other at the TOTAL! offices...

Big boss man: Okay boys, things are looking good but what this mag really needs is a decent competition. We can give away three Game Boys but what will the readers have to do to get 'em?

Steve: Hmm... Tricky!

Thicky: Yes?

Steve: I said tricky not Thicky, Thicky.

Bag Head: I know. Why don't we...

Boss, Steve and Thicky: Oh, shut up

Bag Head. Can't you get on with some colouring-in or something?

Bag Head: Hrmph!

Thicky: I've got it! You know those adventurey book things, where you make decisions and then turn to the page it tells you?

Steve: Yes, go on.

Thicky: Well we could do one and run it down the side of each page.

Steve: Pthfft! You stupid thicky weed!

Everyone knows those things are incredibly complex. You're

even stupider than I imagined if you think we could do that in just a mon-

Big boss man: Good thinking Bicky!

Thicky: Er, it's Thicky Sir!

Big boss man: Sorry Dicky.

Steve: Ahem, Thicky?

Thicky: Yes Steve?

THUD! CRASH! CRUNCH! BLAM!

... And so it was that the TOTAL! adventure came into being. Now all you have to do is play it. One word of advice: Make a map, keep a note of objects you find and write down any clues. Get going and get yourself a Game Boy!

The adventure starts here ...

Outside the heavens have opened. The sky is black, the wind is howling, thunder and lightning are crashing around the house and what seems like the whole of the Atlantic ocean is raining down upon the roof.

You're playing on your Nintendo and are blissfully unaware of the storm raging outside. Suddenly the skylight of the attic blows open and an almighty flash of lightning strikes your beloved games machine. It's over in an instant, leaving nothing but a charred Nintendo, a pair of training shoes and a gently smouldering chair.

On regaining consciousness you look around to find yourself in a strange place. The floor is dark green with strange silver tracks. Bits of oversized electronic equipment surround you and you can see a glowing door a few yards ahead.

The door opens and a man enters. He seems strangely familiar but you can't quite place him. He's wearing red overalls with a spanner in the back pocket. He's also wearing a cap with the letter M emblazoned upon it. The man speaks to you in broken english, Italian perhaps. 'Dear oh dear,' he says, 'you've been sucked inside your Nintendo. But don't worry, to get out all you need to do is find five objects. You'll be given these by the people you meet, but take care, for some are red herrings. The trick is finding out which ones are the false ones.'

'If you discover that someone has lied to you, the object they have given you is useless. But then, of course, they may have lied about another person to make you think that their object is fake, too! Confused? Don't worry... You will be!'

He swallows a mushroom and disappears down a large pipe. There's only one exit from this room so you take a deep breath and walk on through. Turn to

page 4 to start the adventure!



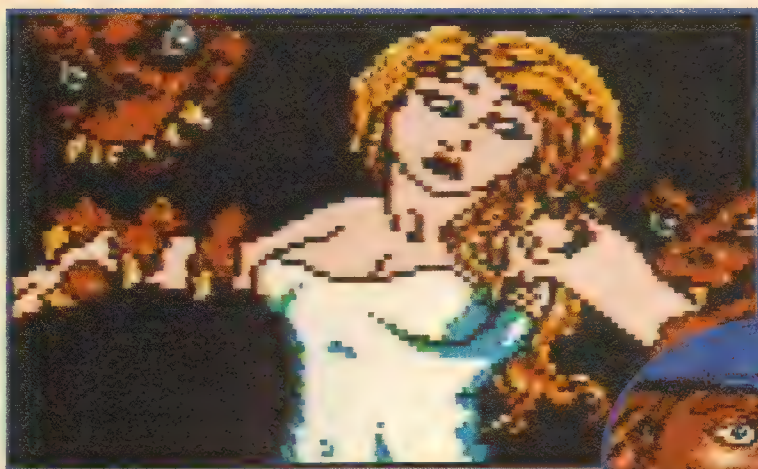
TOTAL! COMPO RULES

You can enter as many times as you like, but you can only win one Game Boy per household. No-one from Future Publishing, their relatives, or friends of their relatives (or friends of their friends) may enter. Any entries from some geek called 'Thicky' will be ceremoniously burned. No correspondence shall be entered into. If we had an editor, his decision would be final. Ha!

So that's what these side thingies are! They never tell me anything! No-one talks to me, moan, whinge...



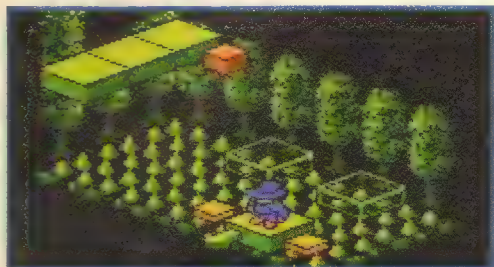
You are in a grand hall. Magnificent trophies line the walls, the floor is made of gold and, well... You get the idea. It's obvious that this place belongs to a mighty warrior. There is an elaborate scroll on the west wall. It reads, 'Welcome to the hall of the Mighty Ja-rat and the All-seeing Thee-ay.' At last! You take a deep breath and stride through to meet these powerful beings. Turn to page 26.



Oh no! Princess Eleanor gets nabbed by the nasties (never very nice). Our hero, Shadax (the bearded bloke), is helpless as she screams for help. But, being a stout hero-type fellow, decides he won't rest until he's rescued her.



Morbius (above) is the wicked deviant who's nabbed the poor princess. As you can see, he performs a cunning illusion in which he appears to set his hand on fire. (He thinks this will impress Eleanor into marrying him – berk!)



On his quest to recover the lost Staff of Demnos, Shadax traverses Morbius' demonic allotment, containing the horrific Cabbage Patch of Nastiness. If only his mum had made him eat his greens when he was a wiz-kid, Shadax would be a) unafraid and b) taller.

SOLSTICE

For NES
(1 player)
From Nintendo/
Software
Creations
Price £30

One thing Nintendo is good at is writing game plots. This one is several thousand words long so in typically helpful TOTAL! fashion I'll condense it a little for you. Land of Arcadia. Morbius = bad guy. Shadax = good guy. Shadax explores Morbius' castle to find Staff of

Demnos. Oh, and there's a princess in there somewhere as well.

There. Now the game itself is a massive arcade adventure with over 250 rooms to explore. Each room is shown in isometric perspective (diagonally, in other words) and you only see one room

Creature castle

You only ever see one room on screen at a time during the game, so here are four of the little devils tagged together. As you can imagine, if we tried to do it for all 250-odd rooms these pages would be about three miles wide. You couldn't carry the mag home from the newsagents without a truck and then you'd have to have a special device to open the pages. Then all the words would be about 20 feet in the air so you'd need a ladder and er...



Cool! A piece of the Staff. (Baghead reckons it's the log from Twin Peaks. This, of course, only goes to show that Baghead is a) stupid and b) very stupid).

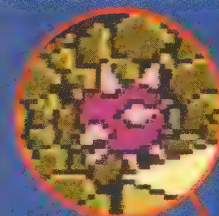
Stupid grunted creature. Follows a set pattern but still manages to get in the way



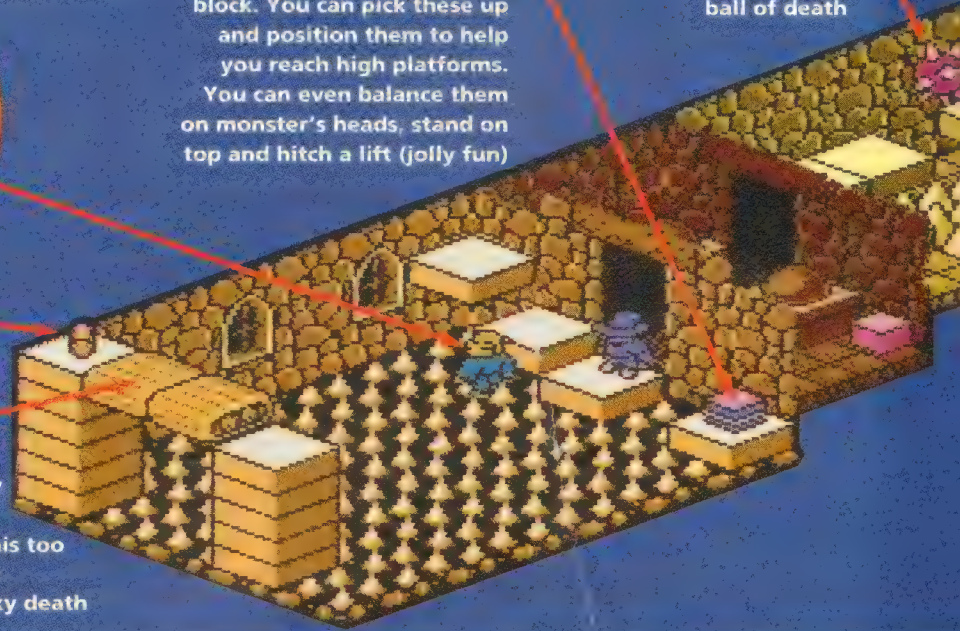
Fig Roll? Actually it's a conveyor belt. Stand on this too long and you get conveyed to a spiky death

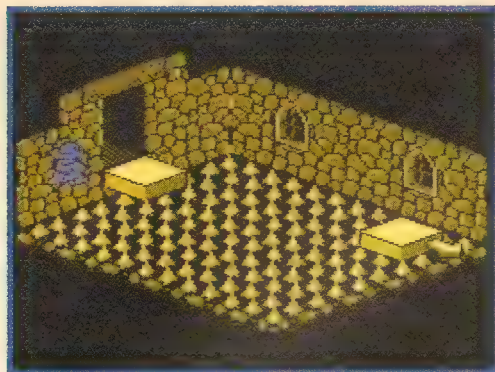


Liquorice Allsort? Mouldy sponge cake? Nope. It's a block. You can pick these up and position them to help you reach high platforms. You can even balance them on monster's heads, stand on top and hitch a lift (jolly fun)

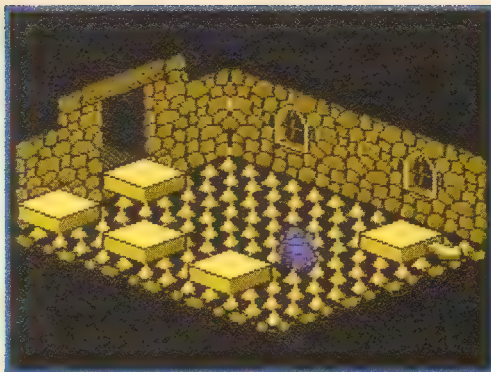


A pink up 'n' downy spiky-ball of death





Oh no! What's the mad fool doing? Shadax has thrown himself off the platform! Surely he'll meet a grisly end being skewered through his lower bits on the spiky floor!? Or will he...?



Phew! Well that's a relief, he's landed on an invisible block. And another one! And another one! Jumping and hoping is a dangerous way of finding these platforms, though. The easier way is...



... To cast the green potion of 'Show Invisible Things'. With a sick-inducing flash of green, all eight invisible platforms are revealed. (Cue stupid Paul Daniels voice-over) Now that's magic!

at a time. Each room flicks into view as Shadax enters through a doorway.

With such a huge quest, the gameplay has been kept nice 'n' simple. Shadax can move in four directions, jump, and pick up 'n' drop objects. What else? Er, that's it. That's all he can do. But don't despair because objects he picks up are very useful.

Blocks of varying shape can be pushed and stacked together so Shadders can reach platforms that were too high for him before (he is a bit of a shorty, after all). He can cast spells by topping up his four personal potion flasks, and there are also plenty of special items that aid our hero's progress and are

vital to completing the game. The Magic boots, for example, give Shadax a higher-than-normal jump. Collect these and he can then explore a whole set of rooms that were out of reach before.

majority of rooms contain things that are guaranteed to mess you up.

Unreachable platforms are just the tip of the iceberg. Wonderfully animated monsters prowl the castle vaults and the slightest touch spells death to poor old Shaddy. Traps are in abundance too, like spiky floating balls.

And what about the invisible platforms? Well for one thing they're invisible and only appear either when you jump on them or cast the appropriate spell. Did I hear someone say fig rolls? Yep, there are plenty of those too. But they only *look* like fig rolls and are, in fact, conveyor belts which send



POTIONS

Graphics are faultless – it all feels very real and objects move exactly as you'd expect them to. Soundtrack and FX are superb!



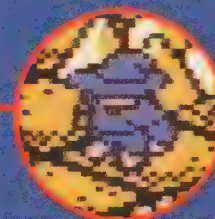
POISONS

No game save system means you must finish the quest in one go. Sometimes its tricky to suss out where things 'are' in the 3D

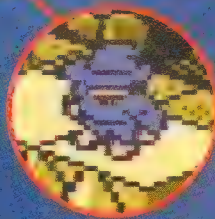
But, of course, life is never simple. Whatever you do or wherever you go, fate is always just around the corner, waiting with a mouldy mackerel in his hand ready to slap you about the face. And sure enough this game is just like real life, since the



Pointy spikes. As with all razor-sharp pointy-spiked objects, keep your distance. (Unless you're Baghead-style stupidly thick, in which case you just stumble blindly around getting horribly punctured)



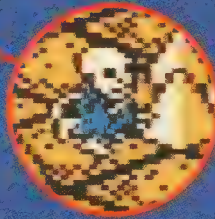
Shadax again. Don't let this confuse you. You don't have to control three characters simultaneously. We've joined a few rooms together and Shadax makes a guest appearance in each one. Still, it's dead clever innit? Eh? Oh well, please yourself!



Shadax, star of Solstice and the chappie you control. Keep him off the spiky bits and avoid anything that moves

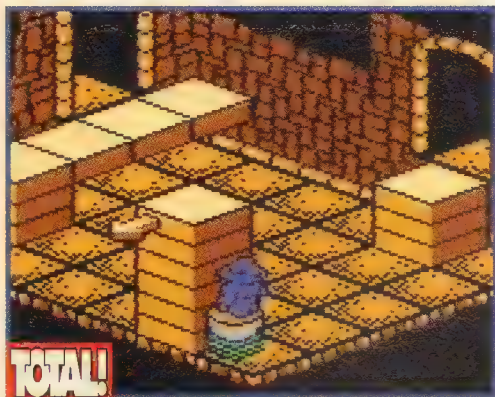


Cripes! It's a deadly eyeball-thing. This one is modelling a fetching green frock from Morbius' summer collection. Smart, but dressed to kill!



Skele-person. Pretty stupid but then what with having all his brain tissue rot away I s'pose he would be

As you turn to face the south wall, the gap closes up. You whirl around to see the ghosts rapidly approaching. Then you remember that you tucked the key into your pocket. You pull it out and quickly locate the keyhole in the south wall. You turn the key and the gap in the wall opens up again. You rush through and the wall closes once more just as the ghosts are about to move in for the kill. However, you left the key on the other side of the wall and there are no exits from the room. Eventually you slave to death. Restart on page 4.

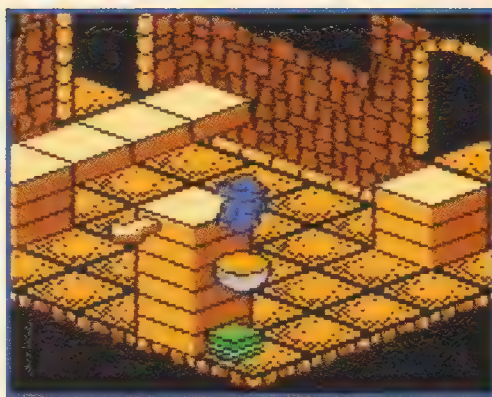


TACTIX Even with two blocks stacked on top of one another, shorty Shadax can't reach that tall tower. Don't panic - there is a solution. All you have to do from this position is press buttons A and B at the same time to pick up the block and jump...

Shad-baby plummeting to his doom. The list of hazards goes on and on (and on).

With a game this size a map is essential and the authors have thoughtfully included one. It only shows rooms that you've already visited but it does display all the exits in any one room. Even if an exit is blocked, locked or simply not visible because you haven't solved a puzzle yet, it still appears on the map. Check the map regularly and you'll be able to pick up clues on puzzles that need solving and directions that need going in.

Words alone can't bring to express how wonderful the graphics are so you'll just have to look at the screenshots. The backdrops are very pretty and the animation on all the tiny characters is outstanding. Believe me, when you see it all



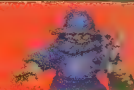
... Then quickly press button B again to drop the block in mid-air. Pressing Button A causes Shadax to jump off the airborne block onto the top of the tower. It's tricky, but it does work well. It's also vital you perfect this jump to stand a chance of finishing the game.

moving it's even better. The amazing thing is how *real* it all feels, like the way you can shift blocks around. I'm convinced this little world really exists inside the NES (well, nearly).

Graphics alone do not a good game make, but fortunately this one has masses of gameplay too. Just when you think you've gone as far as you can, you notice a new exit or learn a new trick which gets you further into the adventure.

Solstice is stunning in every respect but one: there's no password or save option. So if you're gonna complete it you have to do it in one go (groan). But then, if any game is going to make you want to complete it, it's this one. **ANDY**

TOTAL!



Looks



■ NES visuals don't come much better than this. Solstice is a total stunner!

Sounds



■ The medieval soundtrack is very atmospheric and the spot effects are brilliant

Gameplay



■ Wondrous! The puzzles may look simple but they'll make your brain ache!

Life span



■ A challenge and a half - over 250 rooms to explore! Shame there's no save option

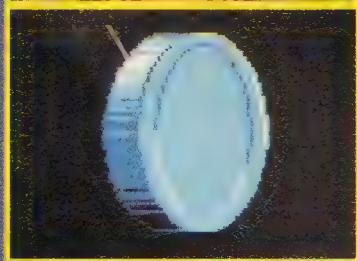


Apart from the lack of a save game this is brill. The graphics are unbelievable, the challenge is huge and the gameplay totally rivetting!

Final rating
90
Percent

Lifting the loot

As you explore Morbius' castle you come across a variety of collectable items. They're all useful and a few of them are essential if you are to find the Staff. Here are the four main types of picky-uppy things:



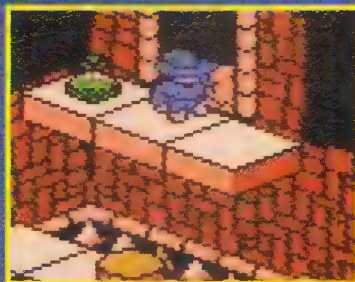
A CREDIT

Looks just like an ordinary, everyday spinny coin, but is, in fact, dead useful. Collect one, then when your last life has gone, you can restart from where you left off. Yip! Yip!



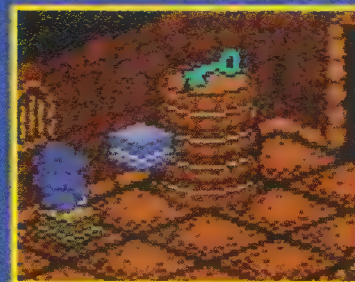
THE BOOTS

These rather tasteless green trainers provide you with the ability to jump higher than normal. You'll look a complete flongy, but at least you'll be able to complete the quest.



THE GREEN POTION

Also available in purple, blue and yellow. These tubby glass vessels are filled with magical ingredients so you can top up your spell-casting abilities and perform all manner of tricks.



THE KEY

Go on then, take a guess... Opens doors? Nope. However, it does do helpful things like make blocks appear where there were none, so you can reach those unreachable bits!

Doctor Who – I'd like you to meet Bill and Ted...

Yo dude!

TIME LORD



For NES (1 players) From Milton Bradley/Rare Price £35



Take that! Time Lord isn't fooled by the old, 'look out! Green flying pig carrying a cannonball above you' trick. Unfortunately, moments later, our hero gets blatted by a cannonball.



On board level four's pirate ship, you encounter massive sea snakes. They serve no purpose other than to get in your way, so slice them into fish steaks.

The man: Time Lord. The place: MB's Time Travel Research Centre. The time: Er... Well, take your pick. Evil Drakkon forces are trying to conquer the earth by invading five time zones: present day (which, for the Time Lord, is 2999AD), medieval England, western USA, a Caribbean pirate ship and World War II. You have to collect five orbs from each level so that you can travel back through time and defeat the Drakkons.

Orbs in the first level are there for all to see. When you spot one, pick it up then go off in search of the next one. The background slides past as you walk along, and also moves up and down as you jump up onto boxes, climb ladders and so on.

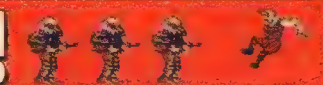
As you progress the orbs get harder to find. Some remain invisible until you approach them.

Some are being 'looked after' by one of the Drakkon troopers, and others float just out of reach leaving you to work out how to get to them – or make them come to you.

Many of the puzzles are straightforward but later on they get a bit silly. You can torture yourself for hours over a floating orb, only to find that there was an invisible platform right next to it. There's no real logic to the puzzles and solving them is more a question of luck than clever thinking. I'm not a violent person but after a while the frustration got to me and I started looking for someone to hit. Unfortunately, Steve had brought a baseball bat in with him, so I left well alone.

To fit in with the time zone they are invading, Drakkon troops dress up like humans. There are

TOTAL!



Looks



■ Plain backdrops, flat characters and a 3D landscape effect that doesn't really work

Sounds



■ Sound effects aren't too bad, but the tunes will drive you barmy in no time

Gameplay



■ Unimaginative, repetitive and riddled with things that make you go AAARGH!

Life span



■ If you can bear to play it at all, you'll probably finish it within a couple of days

Darn it! I like the idea behind this, but the gameplay is so frustrating. Silly puzzles and poor programming have made this a real pain to play.

Final rating
43
Percent

knights a-plenty in medieval England, sharp shooters in the wild west, pirates on the pirate ship (no, really?) and so on. But they're all dead weedy. It's the non-human opponents (like dogs and flying pigs of all things) that cause the problems. However, the effectiveness of your attacks is totally random. Sometimes one punch will send everything within a two-inch radius flying to their deaths, while at other times, frantic bashing of your buttons has no result whatsoever.

There's also no gradual increase in difficulty. It goes from being pretty easy to downright impossible – and this happens at around level three. It's a pain because you can complete half the game in a few hours and then come to a grinding halt. After that I dare say many people will put it away and wish never to see it again.

With it's present faults – obscure puzzles, frustrating play and poor presentation – you'd better spend your time and money on something else. **ANDY**

TOTAL!

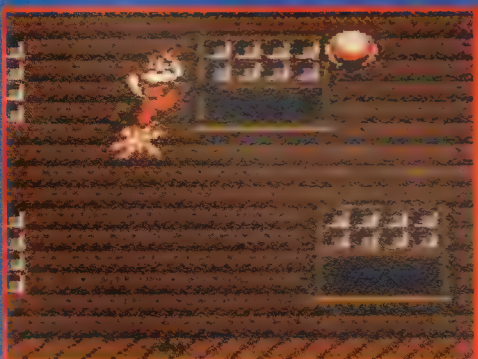
GOOD TIMES

Later levels are big 'n' meaty. There's a nice feeling of achievement when you solve a particularly painful puzzle

BAD TIMES

Some puzzles are far too obscure. It's hard to judge where platforms and enemy characters are supposed to be in the '3D' landscape

Ball games



On the wild west level, you can reach this hovering orb by finding the cunningly hidden platform. After much thrashing around in mid-air, a flash signifies where the platform is. Helpful, huh?

TOTAL!
TACTIX



On the same level, this orb hovers at ground level only to float out of reach as you approach. Stand some distance away, then jump towards it and shoot repeatedly to stun it. (The screen turns pink as you hit it.)

You are in an enormous torture room. All manner of pain-inducing objects adorn the walls and floor. There's a rack for stretching folk, an iron maiden for piercing bodies and some hot irons in the blazing fire on the west wall. On the north wall you can see three levers and a small sign. It reads: "Only one lever will let you pass through the torture chamber unscathed. Go on, 'ave a pull!" If you go for the left hand lever, turn to **page 58**. If you tug the middle lever, turn to **page 22**. If you choose the right hand one, turn to **page 72**.



▲ Shields on for level two – it's a killer! The river gets thinner but the alien nasties come thicker.

You're most vulnerable when you're on foot. Watch you don't plummet into the trenches.



▲ At the end of level two, you meet this massive robot guardian. Shoot the tentacles to destroy him.

This snakey level-one boss goes to pieces when you kill him. Watch out for the bits of body – they hurt!

ISOLATED WARRIOR

WARRIORS
Aliens are well-weird and beautifully drawn. Neat password system. Stacks of meaty weapon power-ups!

WEIRDOS
Some of the levels are long and repetitive. If you lose your power-ups, you're doomed. Tunes are a bit... Odd

**For NES
(1 player)**

**From
Nintendo/
Vap Inc.**

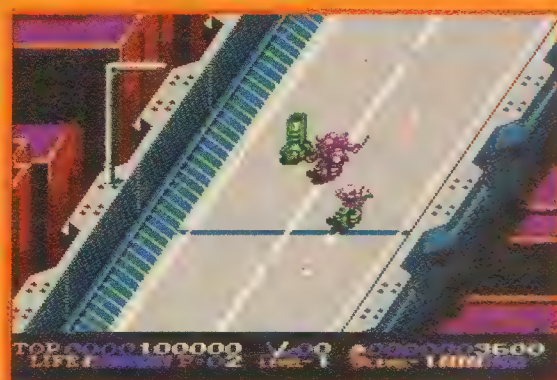
Price £35

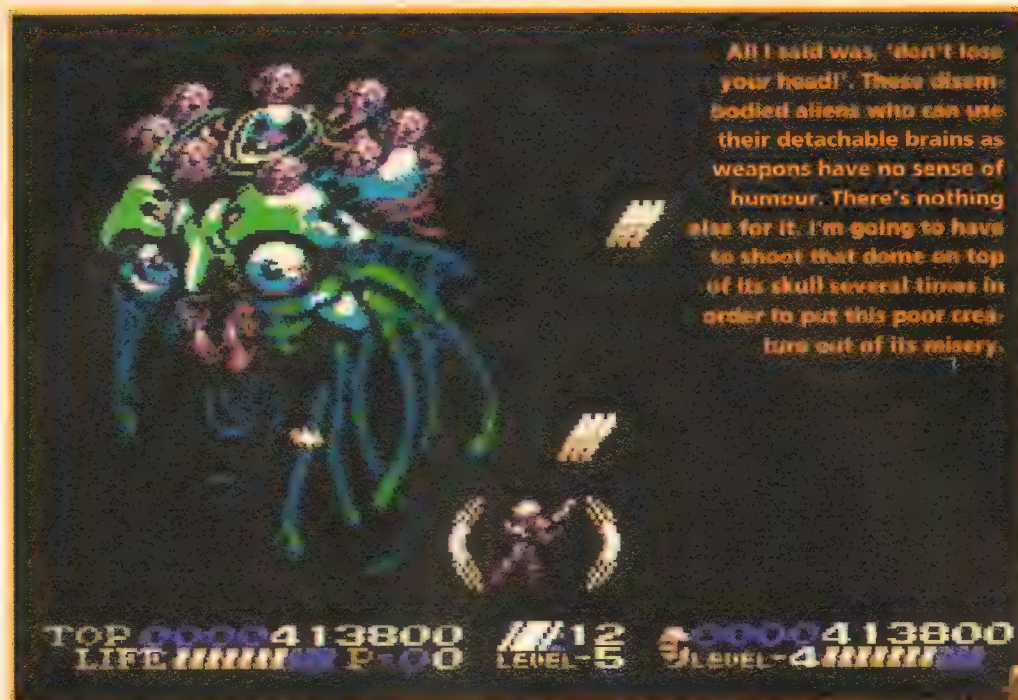
On a far-away planet called Pan, huge oceans lap gracefully against golden beaches. Majestic forests sweep across the land and beautiful snow-capped mountains line the horizon. Unfortunately all these beautiful things are going to waste because Pan's people have all but been massacred by aliens. If that happened here we'd give Johnny Alien a right old kicking. But the people on Pan aren't made of such stern stuff: they've all scarpered leaving Max Maverick (gun-toting loony) alone to

Highway to hell

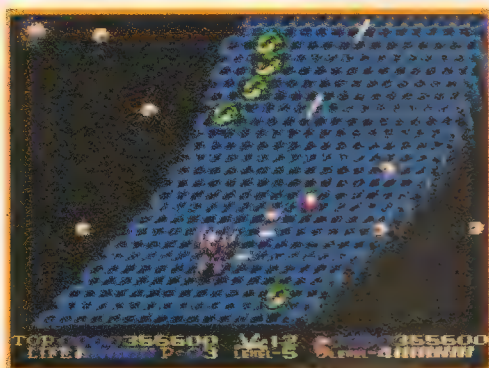
Even an Isolated Warrior needs a break so I'll jump on my jet-powered hobby horse, head for the open road and burn some rubber...

Ah, jetbike is the only way to travel. It's got all the latest weaponry and even has some belly-mounted thrusters so that you can leap high in the air. This is the life. I should be at the beach in no ti- BEEEEEP! Get outta the way vile blue mutoid – and you, you hideous green blob. Oh no! The motorway isn't finished! So *that's* why they put thrusters on these things.





All I said was, 'don't lose your head!'. These disembodied aliens who can use their detachable brains as weapons have no sense of humour. There's nothing else for it. I'm going to have to shoot that dome on top of its skull several times in order to put this poor creature out of its misery.



Oh wow, wibble city! Some of the visual effects are stunning, like this walkway that weaves from side to side. (Blurgh!)

bombs when he kills them.

The Select key switches between available weapons and button B fires them. Button A has a number of uses (unlike Andy - S). Press it once and Max leaps high into the air. Press and hold it and he performs a high somersault. Press it twice quickly and Max launches bouncing bombs.

There's a huge amount of aliens on screen at once with very few lulls in the action. Each of the aliens acts differently: some crawl out of gaping chasms (which Max can fall into if he's not careful). Others fly in formation and others squirm about, blocking the only thin walkway through the scene.

And if these aliens seem bad enough, wait until you meet the end-of-level guardians! There's the mighty Insect Dude (half man half fly-beetle-thingy), or the swift-moving thrashy worm that shoots fireballs from its mouth. Or more terrifying still, the huge robot that takes up two-thirds of the screen and has cannons instead of arms! Argh!

Isolated Warrior is well impressive to look at.

TOTAL!

Looks

Very alien. You have to play it a while before you spot all the stunning effects

Sounds

Oh dear! The soundtracks are a bit duff, but at least the effects make up for it

Gameplay

It's a bit repetitive, but shoot 'em up fans will love the heavy duty firepower!

Life span

Not quite as thrilling as it first looks, but it's still great fun to go back to

Some of the levels drag on a bit, but the graphics are pretty hot (if a little flickery) and the gameplay is frantic! Yep, this is one mean blast!



Final rating
72
Percent

fend off the fiends.

Max's one-man battle against the aliens takes place across a series of landscapes which move diagonally from top right to bottom left. At the end of each level, he meets a big monster creature-robot who is just asking to be taken apart with heavy artillery.

It's an awesome task but fortunately Max has a motorcycle, a hovercraft and plenty of discarded alien weaponry to aid him. At the start Max has a puny laser, but the aliens drop weapons and

The enemy sprites are highly imaginative and the scenery is colourful and detailed. Unfortunately, the long levels go on a bit, and the shoot 'n' jump gameplay drags on in places.

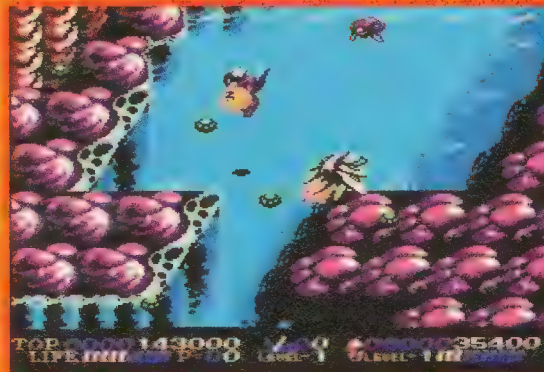
However, the controls are responsive, the game is crammed with mega power-ups and there's more than enough challenge here. There's also a password system so you need never play a level you've already completed. There may only be seven levels, but it should keep you blasting for a while. **ANDY**

TOTAL!

Evasive action!

Other than blowing them to bits, there are two main ways to outwit the weirdos in Isolated Warrior: use your shields or jump for it!

Every once in a while two ghastly goons saunter past carrying a glowing ball. Shoot them, grab the ball and you have temporary shields which kill on contact.



You can't always kill everything on the screen so if things get hectic, jump. You can still move around in mid air so find an alien-free space and head for it.

The dining room. Tapestries cover every inch of the room. A monstrous table dominates most of the floor and is filled with trays of piping hot food. You look at the feast only to discover that all the dishes contain carrots. There's carrot soup, roast carrot in a carrot sauce, grilled carrots, mashed carrots in a carrot crêpe and dozens more dishes. There's also another placard this time saying, 'Brave huh? Well this is your last chance to turn back, or be doomed'. Do you decide to go back north to page 63 or fearlessly continue east on page 53.

DIGGER T. ROCK

For NES
(1 player)

From Milton Bradley/Rare

Price £35

THE LEGEND OF THE LOST CITY

This little blokey must be related to Rockford from Boulderdash, because they both enjoy crawling around caves filled with rampaging nasties and falling boulders! Like Rockford, Digger T. is on a hunt for treasure, fame, fortune and a bit more treasure just in case. He's a greedy little devil and doesn't mind risking life

and limb to get them. This time, he's got his heart set on reaching the mysterious Lost City – and the only way is down...

Digger sets about burrowing his way through a series of caverns filled with tunnels, shafts, pits and slopes. In each cavern Digger has to find the exit which leads to the next cavern, taking him

deeper and deeper into the Earth (scary, huh?).

These caverns are your typical underground, dirt-filled, loads-of-rocks-lying-around type of caverns. With one exception – they're full of monsters. There are giant mosquitoes, mutant hedgehogs, ghosts, cavemen and stonky great dinosaurs – and all of them hate Digger something rotten. They're always sneaking up on him,



Digger T. burrows through some loose sand. Not the best job for people with a fear of enclosed spaces (or mazes, or shovels, or...)



Level three's exit is blocked by boulders – but not for long. As soon as Digger appears, they all come tumbling down to greet him!



Level four is inhabited by crusty cavemen. Since these ancient old duffers don't speak English, Digger lets his shovel do the talking!

Time left before the door closes. When it hits 00 you have to go back, stand on a pillar and reset the timer (groan)

Your current state of health (pretty good), with the number of lives remaining underneath (pretty bad)



Current state of the exit door. This is 28 seconds' worth of openness (if you see what I mean)

Well this'll be the depth then

Weapon: shovel or rocks

Number of ladders

Sticks of dynamite

Number of gems

The score you have managed to amass so far. (A bit pathetic if you ask me)

Digger T. Rock

On his subterranean travels Digger comes across horribly deep chasms. If he's not careful where he treads, he can fall down these and do himself some serious damage (I know it's not nice, but it's dead funny when he hits dirt and deflates!).

To avoid ending up flatter than an M1 hedgehog, Digger can deploy rope ladders which are also found around the caverns. For the longer drops he has to tag ladders together end-to-end. Once a ladder is in place it stays there until he exits the level – or dies in the attempt.



See – if Digger T. doesn't tread carefully or use the ladders which can be found dotted around the caverns, it's plummet city. There he goes!





Keep a lookout for hidden warp-zone thingies (as shown in the two joined-up screens above). These devices transport Digger all over the caverns (even when you don't want them to).

and every hedgehog nibble and mosquito bite reduces Digger's all-too-precious energy.

To defend himself Digger swings a mean shovel, and can hurl little rocks (once he's found some). He can also pick up dynamite which some careless person has left lying around (remember kids, always store your dynamite safely away once you've finished with it). These explosives act as an extremely effective pest repellent (actually it kills



DYNAMITE

Animation on Digger T. is brilliant. If you enjoy complex maze adventures, there's plenty here to get your shovel into!



DINOSAURS

Continual attack from mosquitoes really gets on your nerves. Caverns are too large and complex – a map would have been a big help

'em stone dead) but is mainly used to blow up walls which block the way.

Somewhere in each cavern is a pillar which Digger must stand on. The pillar slides into the ground and activates a 60-second timer, gradually shutting the exit door. If Digger doesn't reach the exit in time, he has to go aaaaaalllll the way back and stand on the pillar again.

Sound frustrating? Well it flippin' well is! Constant attack, horribly complex mazes, finicky controls AND a time limit all go to make this game difficult and annoying.

Digger T. Rock is very nicely put together with well animated creatures (Digger especially), smooth-moving backgrounds, good sound and lots of things to find and collect – but it's just not an awful lot of fun. You do get into it, but it takes a long time and lots of patience. Sorry Digger old chum, but I prefer Boulderdash. **STEVE**

TOTAL!

Looks

■ Digger moves really well, but the rocky landscapes are just a bit too barren

Sounds

■ Soundtrack speeds up as the timer goes down, to really set the pulse a-racing!

Gameplay

■ Sprawling caverns lead to confusion, while constant attack piles on the grief

Life span

■ A 'hole' lotta levels, but it's so annoying you may not want to dig that deep

Lots of neat ideas, but Digger T. Rock is just too frustrating. I didn't really enjoy playing it that much, and I don't think you'll be thrilled either.

Final rating
58
Percent

Dealing out dinosaur death



TOTAL!
TACTIX

There's more than one way to defeat a dino, but some are better than others. If you're feeling a little reckless and have plenty of explosives, you could try blowing the great beast into small lizard steaks. Just place a bundle of dynamite near the dinosaur and hope he walks into it as the stuff goes off. Disadvantages: 1) He might not get blown up. 2) You might



Alternatively you could try this little gem (ahem) which we discovered. You can beat dinosaurs to death with a shovel but it's very dangerous (because they nearly always bite your head off). However, if you drop a jewel on the floor, the dinosaur stops dead in his tracks (perhaps to take a closer look). While he's scanning the pretties, you can safely bash his brains in. Ha!

Dive! Dive! Dive!

TOTAL!
TACTIX



the jet). For some strange reason the enemy get all confused and decide to fly in front of you. Sadly, you have no option but to blow them away (ha!). If you see a missile heading for you just push left or right to spin the plane and shake them off. This will see you safely up to the Russian submarine fleet (in the piccy).

Now, I know it sounds stupid, but this tactic worked for me. As soon as you get airborne point your F-14 directly at the sea (there's a little display which shows the attitude of

In the first one-on-one against Russian Boris 'Buzz' Bombzinsky (the dude on the right), there is a very subtle tactic you can employ to send him to an early watery grave. Because both planes are on a collision course, Boris' plane is almost directly ahead when you he comes into view. Once your plane has levelled out pull up slightly and hammer both fire buttons for all you're worth! This should see him off, leaving you to land safely and face the next opponent. This works on the first couple of pilots - then they get clever!

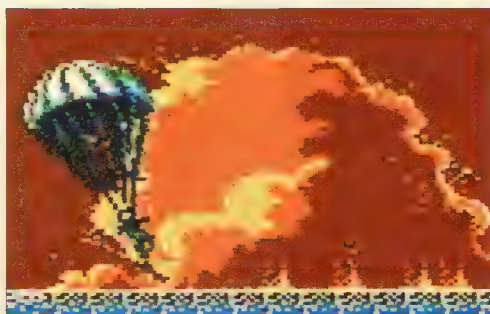


Waaaaah! I'm hit! Er, just get a grip on yourself. It may not be as bad as it looks. Perhaps they hit a pot of red paint left on board by the ground crew. Yes that's what it is...

Phoenix. I've got Sidewinders - they're less accurate, but you get more of them (can an F-14 really carry 60?).

Oh cripes. I've just glanced at my radar and unless the screen is grubby, it looks like there are two blips on an inward bounder (that's pilot talk for 'I'm about to die horribly'). I immediately swing round to give them a good strafing with my cannon... and miss. Well, not to worry, I'll just wait until a jet flies through my missile sight. A little red arrow shows that they're locked-on, then I just have to let the little beasties rip! Scratch one bogey! (Eurgh.)

A warning light on my dashboard thingy tells me that it's my turn to have a missile up the exhaust. To evade the enemy's hardware, you can perform a barrel roll (the sky and the sea swap places) or even loop-the-loop. I've got to admit that even though it puts me off my packed lunch, both manoeuvres look mighty impressive. Do it



... Oh no it isn't. Heck, that's *another* plane I've ruined. The captain's going to be livid! Still, if they take it out of my wages, I reckon I can pay them back by the time I'm 427.

BOTTOM BLASTS
The main mission is too tough and too frustrating. Head-to-head dogfights are usually over all too quickly

right and the loop really makes your stomach turn!

Still no sign of that enemy bomber and things are getting a bit hairy. Whoops! There goes one of my three lives. Oh, and another. Ah. And now I'm dead. That's just the problem: I've flown loads of sorties but I'm still nowhere near finishing the first mission. Rats!

The one-on-one dogfight is fun for a while, but it's the main mission you'll want to play and, as far as I'm concerned, it's too hard. I'm ashamed to admit it, but I keep reaching the second submarine section on the first stage and just can't get past it. No matter what I try, I keep getting blasted to bits.

Now, I'm no video hero, but if you're new to this gaming business, Top Gun The Second Mission could cause you real problems. And that's a shame because it's a pretty smart game. **Steve**



Looks ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ Amazingly fast 3D with some terrific jet fighter graphics. Good intro sequence too

Sounds ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ Realistic jet engine sounds are backed up by some thumping good tunes!

Gameplay ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ The super-fast air combat is adrenaline-pumping but frustratingly difficult

Life span ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ You'll soon get fed up of getting your butt kicked in the main mission

This is an amazing-looking game - a real stomach churner. But it's so flippin' tough your stomach will be churning for the wrong reason

Final rating
66
Percent

TOTAL!



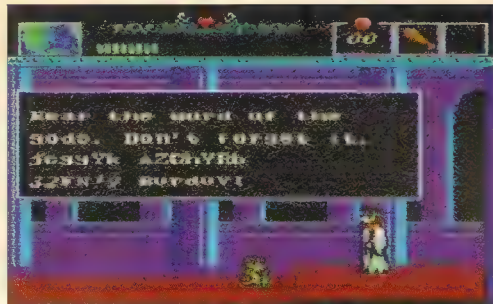
Don't worry, the screen shot isn't upside down – Orpheus has his special 'leaf-attractor' boots on. 'If you go up in the woods today, you're in for a big surprise!'

useful object. Other villagers merely utter cryptic messages, but don't worry – they're not complete dweebs. Their strange ramblings often contain vital clues.

But piecing together clues is only half the story. There are dozens of other neat little puzzles to be cracked. Hidden doors, secret passages, vast tracts of water and large areas of thorny bushes need sorting out before Orpheus can even think about the forthcoming showdown with Hades.

The adventure is complex but the control system is so simple to use you don't even need to think about it. The joystick moves Orpheus around, the buttons control jumps and sword-swings and the Start button accesses Orpheus' backpack. Whenever Orpheus finds a useful item it automatically goes into his backpack. Then when you want him to use it, press Start, position the pointer over the item and press Select: it's sooo easy.

The adventure is pretty massive so it's a good job there's a password system included. Whenever



When Orpheus visits temples he can hear 'the word of the gods'. Apparently this one says things like, '5egyYk AZChVrb'. I dunno about you, but it's all Greek to me...

Orpheus visits a temple in the game, the resident god provides him with a password. Then whenever Orpheus gets stomped by some horny, one-eyed snake-goat-bat beast, you can enter the code and restart from that temple without losing all the luvverly booty Orpheus has amassed.

If you get your kicks from non-stop action shoot 'em ups, this may not strictly be your cup of tea. There's plenty of action in places but there's also a lot of wandering around and heavy thinking to be done. You'll probably spend a lot of time travelling back and forth across the land, making maps and sussing out solutions. It's easy to play yet hugely difficult to master.

Still, if you've been toying with the idea of getting into NES adventuring, Battle Of Olympus is as good a place as any to start. The graphics are mighty fine, the quest is exciting and there's a hell of a lot of game here for your money.

ANDY

TOTAL!

TOTAL!

Looks

■ Sprites are neat and well-animated and some of the backdrops are superb

Sounds

■ Pretty average really. A few nice spot effects but the tunes are a bit naff

Gameplay

■ An engrossing quest, and the action scenes make a nice addition to the puzzles

Life span

■ It's bigger than Bag Head's nose! You'll still be playing this one next Christmas



This is a lot prettier than many adventures and there's plenty of slice 'n' dice action. Variety, good atmosphere and a quest that goes on and on!

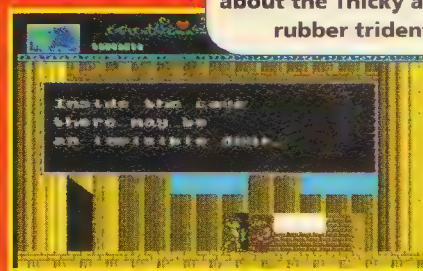
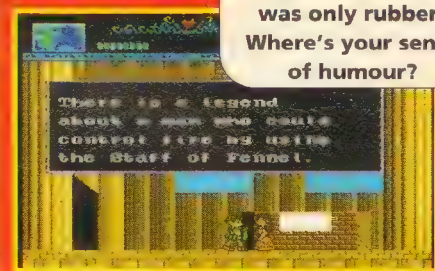
Final rating
92
Percent

Door-to-door swordsmen

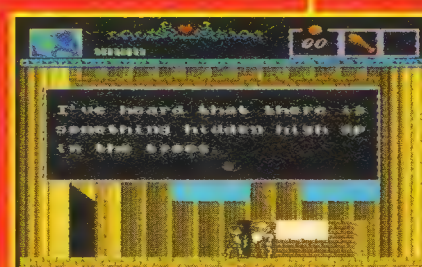
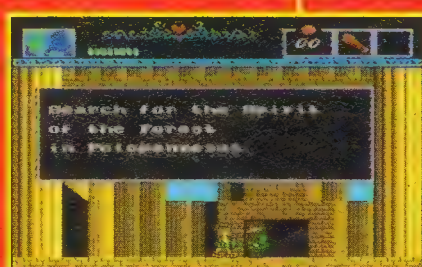
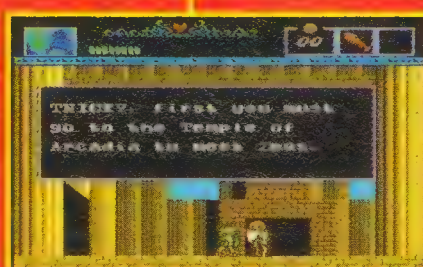
It was a joke! I thought you knew it was only rubber! Where's your sense of humour?



MY sense of humour?! Let me tell you the one about the Thick and the rubber trident!



Orpheus can talk the hind legs off a Minotaur – and he'll have to if he wants to complete this quest!





DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

For NES (1 player)

From Palcom/Konami

Price £40

We join the adventure on a dreary October day in 1149 AD (a Wednesday, probably). It is a dark time for these sainted isles. The King has popped his clogs and gone to sit at that great round table in the sky. The throne lies vacant and the smelly old Normans have invaded, taking over the southern counties. Boy, the place is in a right old state.

With the country kingless, six brave knights are battling for the Crown of England – three Saxons (hurrah!) and three Normans (ptbrtphrbtht!). You play one of the Saxons and can pick your char-

acter from a choice of four knights. Then you're plonked down in one of three Saxon strongholds to begin your campaign.

From your castle headquarters, the immediate aim is to build up an army and capture some of the surrounding counties. The locals gladly pay your taxes (otherwise you'll go and hack them to bits) and the gold goes into your coffers to be spent on footsoldiers, knights on horseback, catapults, new castles (and really large cans of Brasso).

As you move from county to county, it doesn't take long before you bump into an enemy army –

and you can guess what happens next! Battles are generally won by the larger force so it's best to think strategically. If you and a few men stumble upon an entire campaign army, you're doomed!

To become king you have to capture all the Norman-held castles. So once the size of your bank account has grown large enough, it's time to buy a catapult and lob a few hundredweight of boulders at the enemy's wall. The more masonry you knock down, the better your army's chances of defeating the Norman garrison inside.

And that's pretty much the thrust of your

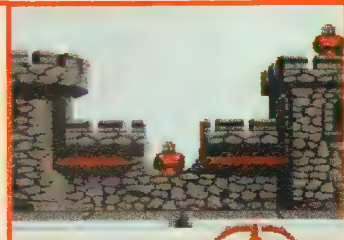
England 1149 AD

This is where you plot your road to the throne. Red flags are Norman, blue shields Saxon (I'm the chequered flag). The little yellow horse is my army on the move.



Robin Hood

Your green-swathed chum offers his help three times during the campaign. His merry men ambush the Normans before a battle so your lot can step in and finish them off! Ha!



Under siege

My home castle is under siege from those Norman swine! Now I have to fend them off by myself armed only with a crossbow. As you can imagine, this bit is tough!



Sieging

This is the fun part of the battle, where you hurl rocks at some Norman's house. Smash his wall and victory will be yours!



Raiding and rescuing – With no TV, you spend your nights out on raids, hacking 'n' slicing your way through enemy guards to steal their gold (Cornwall is always good for a few quid). Alternatively, you may be called upon to rescue a maiden. (Unfortunately, I had to knock this one out before she'd come with me.)



Cripes, that sword's a bit sharp – you could have someone's eye out! Um, er, maybe we could become monks or something...

KNIGHTS

There are lots of different things to do during your campaign. It should take a while to Crown all four Saxon knights. The feeling of power is great!

PEASANTS

You can see the end screen after only one day's play. Animation, graphics and sound aren't nearly as good as they could have been

campaign – winning (and holding) counties, earning gold to build up your forces and capturing enemy castles. However, there are a number of other diversions to keep you entertained along the way. For instance, you can raid enemy castles for their gold. Swash and buckle your way through the guards and you can make off with their monthly takings. Ha!

You also get the chance to rescue a princess. Which is basically the same as raiding but instead of winning a big chest-full of gold, you win a girlie with a big, erm... heart.

Then there's the tournament where knights gather together to show off their prowess with the 'lance' (long, pointy stick) and Morning Star' (spiky ball and chain). Compete for fame and, should you win, your leadership rating is improved (useful for rallying wimpy forces in battle). Choose land, on the other hand, and instead you gamble



When you enter into battle this is what you see. Unimpressive, isn't it? The knights wave their swords a bit and, well, that's yer lot.

one of your counties against that of your opponent (if you're good at this jousting business you can take large chunks out of the enemy's estate. If you're not, they'll take large chunks out of you).

Defender Of The Crown is already well known on home computers, and this NES version is bit late in coming. However, it's just as much fun as all the others. A few picture screens have been missed out, but there are two new sections – Morning Star combat and defending your castle – so NES owners get more than most.

Unfortunately, this is the sort of game that you either a) lose horribly or b) win by lots – there's no middle ground. In the first day's play I had several disastrous attempts, then it all went to plan and the Crown of England was mine. I still have a bash from time to time, but if you only play to see the end screen, you might feel a bit robbed. **STEVE**

TOTAL!

Looks

■ The animation is generally naff but some of the still pictures are dead smart

Sounds

■ Medieval tunes are average and the sound effects are a nightmare (eek!)

Gameplay

■ Exciting mixture of arcade action and strategy. Varied and very playable indeed

Life span

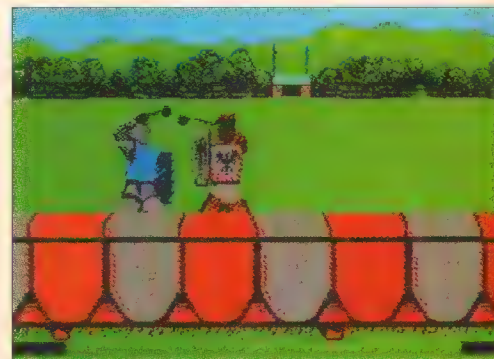
■ You can finish the campaign in one day, but you'll still enjoy playing it again



Ye olde brass band heralds the start of a tournament. Here you can choose to joust for fame or land. Choose land and you risk losing one of your counties. Choose fame and you only risk being laughed at.



This is the joust, as viewed from inside your helmet. It's just my luck to be drawn against Deadly Desmonde the Dwarf of Devon. Still, all I have to do is position the point of my lance on his shield to unseat the little dweeb.



Bah! We both fell off and now it's down to the 'Morning Star' (vicious spiky-ball-thing-on-a-stick) to resolve the combat. As you can see, that mangy midget Desmonde has brought his own box to stand on. Ref!

The TOTAL! Gameplayer

Hello and welcome to the first stage of the TOTAL! Gameplayer Championship 1992, our very own 'search for a star' (oh yuk).

The aim is of course for us – with your help – to find the very best NES and Game Boy players in the whole of the UK.

The official bit

Please fill in all these details, then send them – or a photocopy will do just as nicely – to: The TOTAL! Gameplayer Championship 1992 First Round Challenge, TOTAL!, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW. The closing date for all entries is Friday 31 January 1992, so you'd better get cracking, hadn't you?

This TOTAL! Gameplayer Championship 1992 First Round Challenge is organised by:-

Name

Address

Phone

It is played on (cross one out):-

NES **Game Boy**

The game being used for this First Round challenge is:-

And the winner is:-

Name

Address

Phone

Final witnessed by:-

I witnessed the final and declare that the winner is as stated above. Signed:

1

2

3

As you've already guessed, we're going to be asking you to help us. (Basically it's because we're dead lazy and we never do any work we can get someone else to do.)







It goes like this. You, dear, trusted reader, are going to set up a Nintendo championship.

Oh yes you are. It can be in your street; at school; at work; at your youth club; local scouts – or any society you're involved with. In other words, we *simply don't care*.

All you have to do is gather together some Nintendo players – and get going! It'll be such

First round closes //199_

Second round closes //199_

_____		_____	
_____		_____	
_____		_____	
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How to use this table

1. This First Round Challenge championship table is designed for 16 players. If you have fewer, simply start with the second round (eight players) or semi-final (four players). Still, the more the merrier: if you have over 16 players, you'll need another copy of this chart. Either use a photocopy – or why not buy another copy of this utterly brilliant magazine (available from all good newsagents)?
2. Make it clear to everyone entering that it is up to them to get each game played by the date specified. And make sure you fill this bit in each time, otherwise you won't get it all over and done with in time, and then where would you be?
3. If someone else you know also wants to organise a First Round Challenge, let them. People can even enter both versions – so long as there is one winner, and only one, at the end.
4. Winners' names will be printed in a future issue of TOTAL!, and will then be put in touch with another First Round Challenge winner to play a second round. Then we'll be organising regional heats. But let's get this round out of the way first, shall we?

Championship 1992

The
First Round
Challenge

fun you'll want to send us all your money (used notes only).

In organising this challenge, you will as if by magic come up with the name of someone local who is utterly brilliant, Nintendo-wise. Then you, as organiser, send in the form – signed by three witnesses

(including the organiser, ie you again) – and we do the rest, getting your champ in touch with another one based nearby.

Then, er, then... Um, well we haven't thought very hard about what happens next. We think we'll probably be having some area heats organised in

shops that sell Nintendo. Or something. Anyway, it'll be utterly brilliant and totally (ahem) well organised. Trust us. *We know what we're doing.*

The main thing is to do the first heat and see what kind of a response we get. Right now, it's up to you...

Semi-final closes //199_

Final takes place on //199_

And the winner's name is...







WINNER



Wow! This guy can obviously play games!
(If he can write as well I can get rid of Thick! Fab-o-brill!)

Those TOTAL! Gameplayer Championship 1992 rules in full

1. The person organising this first round gets to choose which game is being used. After all, it's them organising it, so it seems only fair.
2. All games must be played by the time stated. If one player has not turned up, the other player automatically goes through. If the judge (ie the organiser) decides that neither player is to blame, the winner is decided on a coin toss.
3. Under no circumstances must money change hands. There is no charge for entering.
4. The organiser's decision is final. However, the TOTAL! team are willing to adjudicate if there are any disputes, provided the organiser sends a letter signed by those involved in the dispute, together with a stamped addressed envelope, to: TOTAL! Championship, TOTAL!, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.
5. Neither TOTAL! nor Future Publishing can accept any responsibility for the way this championship is organised at this stage, nor for any money involved, in any way, shape or indeed form whatsoever. Remember, folks, it's all for fun!
6. Er...
7. That's it.

IVAN 'IRONMAN' STEWART'S SUPER

OFF ROAD



Hoorah! A four player game! Yippity yip!

But there's only two of us you thicky drongoid!



For NES (1-4 players)

From Nintendo/Trade West

Price £25

Take a racetrack, throw on some ramps, bumps and jumps, add a dash of mud and you have the perfect venue for a short-course race. But what is short-course racing? Well, it's an American sport (because only the Americans are wacky enough to do it) and involves getting round a stupidly bumpy track in a stupidly chunky flat-bed truck as fast as possible.



It really comes alive when all four competitors are human. The eight different tracks provide a varying challenge to your driving skills

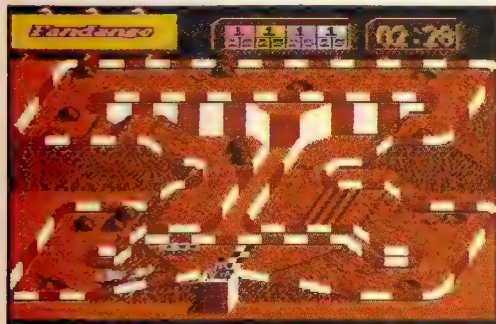
NES-owning folk on this side of the Atlantic can now have a crack at the sport. And what's more, with the four-player adapter connected, you can race against three of your mates as well.

There are eight different tracks, and the championship is spread over 40 races. This means you have to complete each track more than once. So to add a little bit of variety, you get to drive

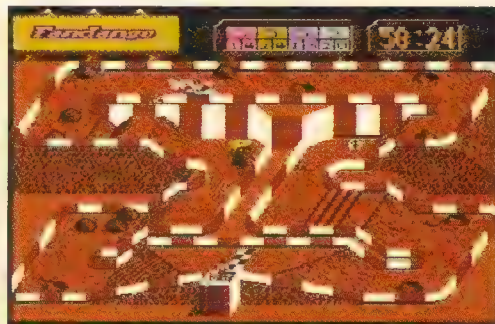
round the courses in both directions (whoopee).

The first 15 meetings are qualifiers for the final championship, so you have plenty of races in which to sharpen your driving skills. Also, there's a continue option during the qualifiers so you can make a couple of mistakes before being dumped back on race number one.

However, there are no continues in the championship proper. When you start you have three lives and if you come fourth in any race you lose a life. Lose all three and it's back to the start of the



And they're off! I'm in the pink truck (pink! Not very macho knobbly-wheeled off-road racery is it?). Anyway, I'm in third place at the moment, but it's early days yet.



We're on the last lap, coming along the back straight and there's a struggle for first place. Time to kick in the nitros (especially when there's money to be picked up!).



Ta-daa! I won (again) and have spent all my cash on trucky-type things. I'm playing on my own 'cos Steve and Baghead kept losing and refused to play Andy 'Ironhead' Dyer.

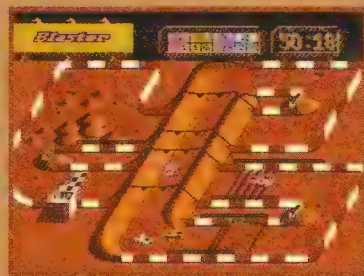
Truck track tricks

We've managed to grab a picture of all eight short-course tracks. It didn't take us long (but it did bore us senseless). Hope you're satisfied.



Big Dukes

Well, the first tip is to go very fast, not crash and win (but I guess you knew that already). On this track remember to hit the nitro as you approach the huge pit in the middle. This way you avoid any collisions with other truckers. Oh yes, and for some strange reason you can steer the truck in mid-air!



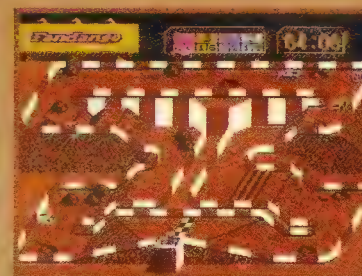
Blaster

No prizes for guessing where you should use the nitro on this course. But unlike most tracks, the nitro is also useful for saving time over those rocky lumpy bits on the left. You should also use the nitro to jump over the trench in the middle (again to avoid any nasty truck-bumping business).



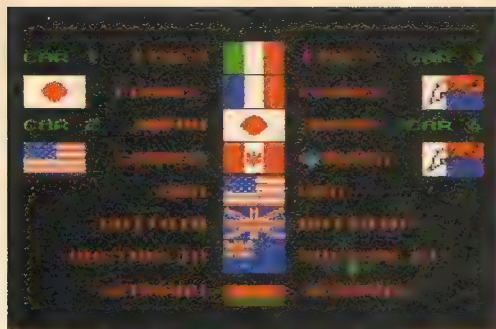
Cliffhanger

See that steep slope on the right? Always use the smooth bit, because the steps slow you down. And when travelling clockwise around this track you can streak ahead of the pack by hitting nitro on the right hand slope. Give the white oil drums a wide berth. It's all too easy to accidentally steer inside them.



Fandango

This track is fairly straightforward, and the one which you meet most often. The only things to remember are don't speak to strangers, never accept a lift from someone who looks like Stevie J and always, always use nitro along the back straight. The corners are so tight, nitro is wasted on them.

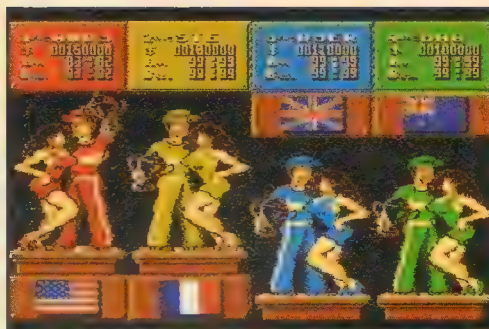


This is where you get to choose your nationality. Hmm. Erm, that's about it really... Flags are pretty aren't they? I especially like the Japanese one with the big red spot. Er... qualifiers for you matey.

So does this mean you only have to come first in the very last race to win? Not at all. At the end of the championship, you get placed in Ivan Stewart's Off-Road Club. It's an exclusive affair and only has ten members. Your position on the club ladder is decided on points, so if you don't give it your best shot in each and every race you won't get very far. Having said that, I got to sixth position on my second go, so it's a bit easy-peasy.

As well as being too easy, the gameplay is a tad annoying. No - actually, it's very annoying. For some reason the other competitors seem to drive pedal cars in one race, then switch to jet-power for the next. You never really know how good (or bad) your competitors are going to be from one race to the next.

This problem also has a knock-on effect when it comes to kitting out your truck in the shop. After each race you can spend your winnings on all sorts of spanky vehicle-improving items. This *should* add a bit of strategy to the game. For instance, if



And it's another win for me! Stinger bag came second with Baghead bringing up the rear (as usual). I came third too, by driving two cars at once. (Ooh, you fibber! - Steve.)

you spend all your money on tyres, it's possible that your opponents will have the upper hand in the next race. But even when my truck was up to full power on everything, I still suffered a pasting

when the other racers got that mysterious turn of speed I was talking about. There seems to be little reward in making the right buying decisions so in one-player mode

the shop is just a teensy bit useless.

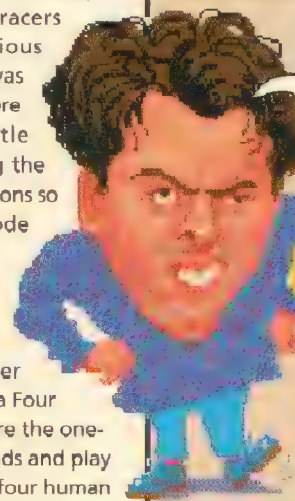
Before you cross this game off your 'things I really ought to spend some money on' list, it does have one redeeming feature - the multi-player option. If you're lucky enough to own a Four Score adapter, your best bet is to ignore the one-player option, round up family or friends and play head-to-head (to-head-to-head). With four human participants the problems described above disappear, so you can get on with enjoying a straightforward and fairly jolly race game.

If you have a Four Score and are desperate for something to plug it into, then Ivan 'Ironman'

BLOW-OUTS

Too easy - it won't take long to reach the top of the club ladder.

Too random - one minute the opponents are turbocharged, the next they're snail-powered



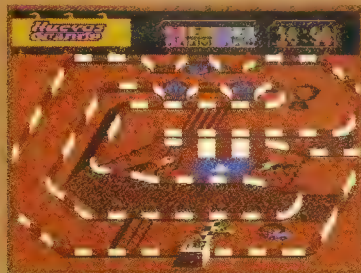
No good as a one-player game - it's too easy and too dull. It's only worth a second glance if you're really into simultaneous multi-player action

Final rating
54
Percent

Stewart's Super Off-Road is just about worth a second look. Otherwise I'm afraid this game is a bit of a four-wheel drive off-road turkey. **ANDY**

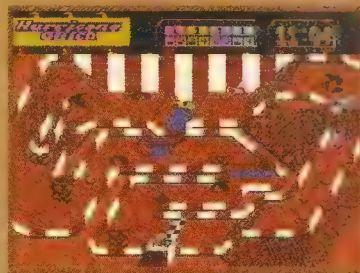


To give you a head start on the other truckers, we've also hand-picked the tastiest tips for each track. Some are slightly over-ripe and a bit squidgy, so don't worry if you feel a bit poorly after reading them.



Heuvos Grande

Translated into English, this means 'wet and big'. The watery bits slow you down badly. The little pools at the top are easily avoided by steering a straight course right through the middle. The big pondy thing can be jumped if you line yourself up with the ramps on either side and nitro like mad!



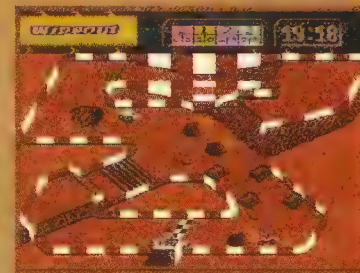
Hurricane Gulch

This is the very last track you'll meet - and it's a killer. There are only a couple of chances to use nitro: on the far left and far right straights, and also across the watery trench at the top. There's a useful short cut on the left side if you can line yourself up well enough. The rest is just a mad jostle for position.



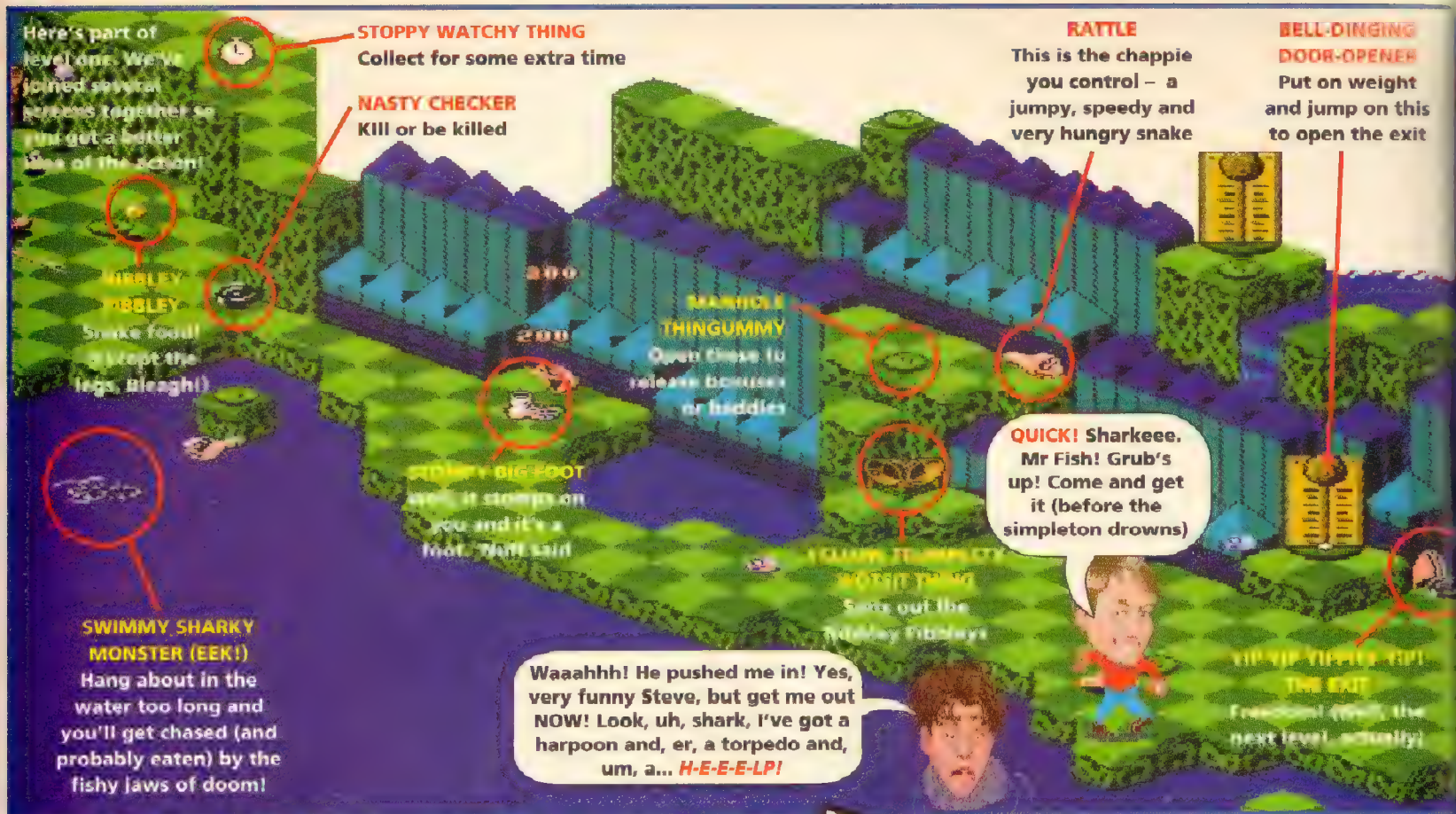
Sidewinder

Lots of scrummy nitro opportunities here, with five decent straights to hammer along. However, there are a few nasty obstacles which tend to pin you to the barriers if you hit them wrong (that big mound at top left is a good example). Get into the lead quickly, as there is a heap of bonuses to be had.



Wipeout

The straight which runs from bottom left to top right is asking to be nitroed along. Unfortunately, its opposite number is too lumpy and twisty to do the same. If you steer between the obstacles on this stretch, you can gain a good lead over the opposition. Watch out for trucks on the cross-over.



SNAKE RATTLE N ROLL

For **NES (1-2 players)**
From **Nintendo/Rare**
Price **£25**

to go and gain weight. They do this by eating Nibbley Pibbles (their fave) which are ejected from yellow trumpet things. All you have to do is

hang around until they come flying out, then get your snake to stick out his tongue. If your aim is good, the Nibbley disappears into the snake's mouth and a new bit of tail appears. (This is dead good: if you look closely, you can see the Nibbley moving along your snake's body!)

Eat enough Nibbles and your snake's tail grows really long. This makes them heavy and allows them to operate the door bell. Easy!

That's pretty much the aim of the game, but

critters and helped them get out of this rut.

To do this you have to guide them through each of the 11 extremely odd levels. You control Rattle if you're on your own, and are joined by Roll in a two-player game. Now for snakes, Rattle and Roll are pretty agile. They have a good turn of speed, can jump across gaps and even swim a bit. And when it comes to close quarters combat, they flick a mean forked tongue!

A little door marks the exit from each level and the key is one of those fairground gadgets where you whack the pad with a hammer. If you hit it hard enough, the slidey bit whizzes up and dings the bell. In this case Rattle and Roll have to jump onto the pad to ring the bell and open the door.

Now this is the clever bit. If Rattle and Roll aren't heavy enough to sound the bell, they have



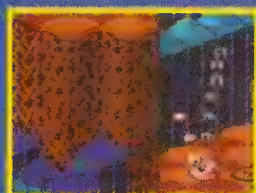
Urk! Having crawled up a slippery ice slope on level nine (and got himself a frost-bitten belly in the process) Rattle suddenly gets flattened by a rampaging snowball!



TOTAL TACTIX Near the start of level one you'll see this small island. There's no manhole on it, but if you climb on and press button B a few times you get a warp to level three!

Aaaaaaaargh!

There's more than one way to skin a snake - and the ten methods below all appear before the end of level three! As you progress you'll be introduced to more and more devious ways of dying. As well as a mixture of meanies, you'll be confronted by dozens of dastardly deathtraps. Slither carefully, or you'll be shedding more than just your skin...



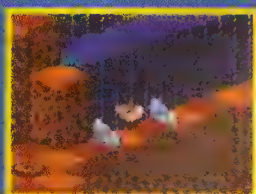
1 Falling off the landscape

Don't do it. It's neither big nor clever - in fact it's downright deadly.



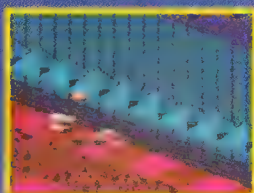
2 Flattened by Big Foot

If the smell doesn't get you, this outside stomper will.



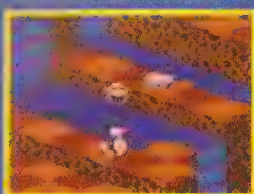
3 Getting sliced by the Blades

There you are slithering along when, wosh! It's bye-bye snakey.



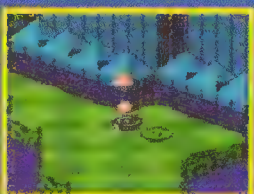
4 Squashed by the Anvils

Metal meanies that lie in wait... Then plummet to your doom!



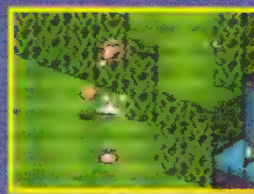
5 Eaten by the Toilet Seats (!)

Kill these before they get you or it's another life down the pan.



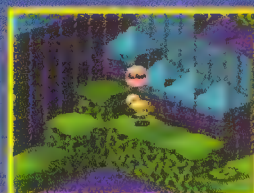
6 Caught by a Checker

Play Draughts with this bounding beast and you'll get crowned.



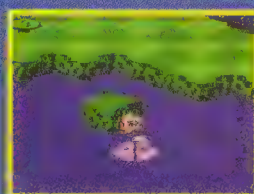
7 Nobbled by a Nibbly

Nibbly Pibbleys which don't run away are bundles. Don't eat them!



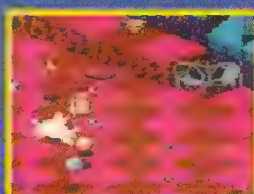
8 Munched by a Mushroom

Fiddle with the fungi and you'll end up as snake omelette.



9 Swallowed by the Shark

You can swim, but don't hang around or it'll be snake steaks for tea.



10 Spiked by the Pins

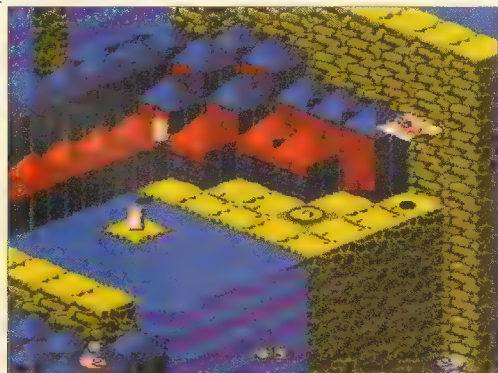
Avoid the killer Pin Cushion - it'll give you the needle, sharpish.

WRIGGLERS

Some of the smartest (and cutest) creatures you'll ever see on an NES! Two player fun and frolics with Rattle 'n' Roll on screen together

there are lots of other meanies to watch out for - and they're all as wonderfully drawn and animated as Rattle and Roll. In fact everything looks great and moves beautifully - even the Nibbly Pibbleys run around on weeny legs. When they get eaten, the snakes munch a few times and then spit the legs out! Oh, it's all so wonderful!

Er... Sorry, I was getting a bit carried away there. Yes, the meanies. Heck, there are loads of 'em: Big Foot stomps around, Bladez come up out of the ground to slice you up, and the Anvilz pounce from above. Watch out for these otherwise your snake ends up like a cobra (he gets a flat head). My favourite is the shark which homes



Oooh! I hope this Magic Carpet has got its flying licence. It looks a bit threadbare in the middle... And on the edges. What's that dangly bit!? Woaaaa! Let me off!

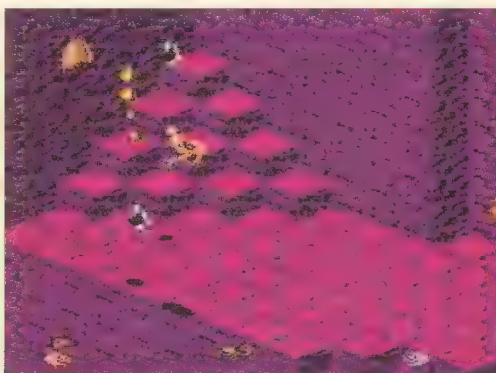
STOMPERS

It's hard to follow the 3D landscape, and those vital jumps are tricky. Controls are a bit wibbly - snake steering can prove slippery

in on Rattle and Roll if they fall in the water. At first he's just an ominous dark patch in the blue (with Jaws-style tune) but if you don't get on dry land pretty sharpish, your snake gets snapped up!

But then just getting from start to finish is tricky enough, what with small platforms perched perilously above... well... nothing! Mis-judge a jump and you slither off the edge and plummet to your doom. There may only be 11 levels, but finishing them all will take some serious playing!

I love this game. It looks amazing, sounds great, is incredibly slick and wonderfully playable. If you don't get this you're lower than a snake's belly. **STEVE**



Level eight, and Rattle becomes Scuba-snake in order to catch the finned Nibbly Pibbleys as they swim about. (These black Nibbleys are just yellow ones in disguise.)

TOTAL!

Looks



■ WOW! It all moves smoothly and... Well, just look at the screenshots, willya?

Sounds



■ Rock 'n' roll soundtracks to bop to. And the sound effects are bloomin' brill too!

Gameplay



■ Loads of fun - especially with two players. A real test of your joypad skills!

Life span



■ 11 long levels, but find the right warps and you could complete it quite quickly



Another unbelievable game from Rare and Nintendo. It's challenging, plays like a dream and the two-player option is the biz!

Final rating
90
Percent

As you approach you can see that the figure is a man with a hard hat and a shovel. 'Hello,' he says cheerfully. 'It's a good job you came to see me, this is a dangerous place. My name's Rockford and this diamond is one of the five objects you're looking for. You'd better leave now, only a man of my digging experience can survive in this room.' With that he hands you the diamond, wanders off into the distance and promptly gets flattened by a boulder. Another glowing door appears and you quickly walk through it. Turn to page 7.

BOULDER DASH

For NES
(1-2 players)

From First
Star Software

Price £25

Millions upon squillions of years ago a game appeared on those tacky home computer things, and game players saw that it was good. And they looked upon the face of the main character and verily did they say 'Corks! That Rockford bloke's a bit of a laugh isn't he?' And so it was that the legendary game of Boulderdash left its mark on the gaming world. Now, years later, it's born again on the NES - and it's better than ever!

The idea is simple enough: run around mazes, collect diamonds and try not to get flattened by the boulders. The NES version of the game has been hugely Mario-fied, and a good job too. There are six worlds each holding four levels, so in typical

Nintendo fashion a map of all six worlds is displayed at the start. You have to work your way through the worlds in turn, but can play each world's levels in any order you like. There's also a neat password system so that you don't have to go back through worlds you've already conquered.

On each level you're told the number of diamonds you need to collect. Many levels contain far more diamonds than you need, but getting past the

ROCK HARDS
24 levels. Blimey! Big or what? Fiendish puzzles, but you'll learn a new trick each time you play. Everything moves nicely - even the backgrounds

CAVE-INS
The puzzley action doesn't alter much from level to level. Could be too hard for younger gamers: world two is horrific, and it only gets worse...

Rockford's realms

We've managed to pluck a level from each world for you to look at. So how did we do it? Well it was a team effort. I played it non-stop while Steve fed me and propped my eyelids open with matchsticks. Well... Actually, that's not quite true. In fact we cheated. And if you want to see all the worlds of Boulderdash for yourself check out our tips section in next month's TOTAL! Be there!



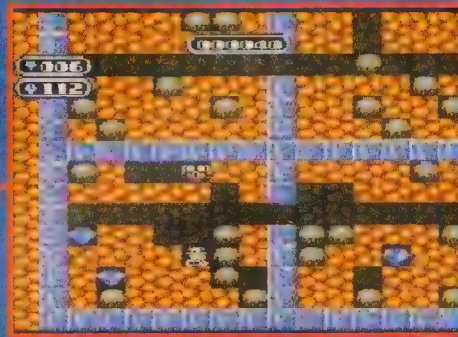
Level 4 - Ocean world

Ocean World is full of TackyTackies. As you can see, I got horribly confused and ran away from the diamonds while trying to collect the boulders... How sad



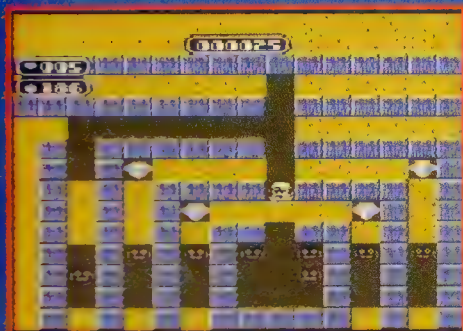
Level 2 - Ice world

The mammoths drop on you, the PingPings chase you and the Amoebas block your way. This is harder than getting Steve to lend me 10p.



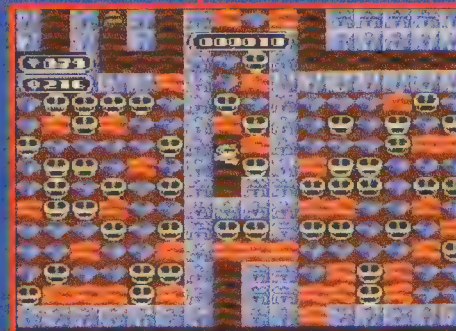
Level 1 - Boulder world

This is the only level I could complete without my brain turning to jelly. And that's only because there are very few monsters to get in the way.



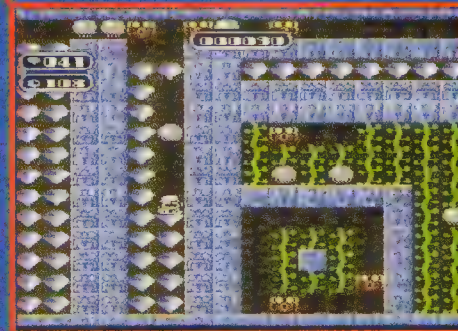
Level 3 - Sand world

FlapFlaps abound in Sand World. There I am in the middle, staring blankly at a problem that my feeble, pea-sized brain can't even begin to work out.



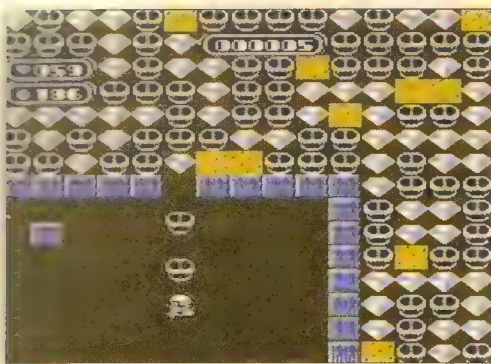
Level 6 - Volcano world

Against all odds I've managed to reach the final world. There are plenty of diamonds around but almost every one is guarded by a sinister skull.



Level 5 - Relic World

On this level there are deep pits full of diamonds. But there's usually a boulder above that follows you down. And if they don't get you, the BimBims will.

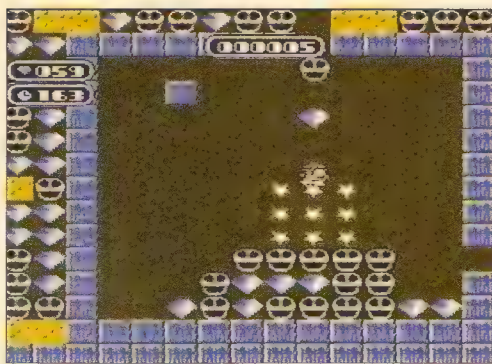


Ooh 'eck! Now I've done it! If I don't scarper pretty pronto, I'm going to get crushed by huge amounts of falling debris!

huge amount of traps and hazards is the problem. There are so many fiendish puzzle elements in the game that Stevie J exploded after only ten minutes of play. Still, no great loss.

The play area is filled with mud which disappears as you tunnel through it. There are also massive boulders dotted around, and if you remove the mud from beneath a boulder it drops until it meets some more mud, a wall, another boulder – or you. If there are several boulders stacked together and you remove the mud from around the sides, their irregular shape causes them to topple over. Now things get a bit more complicated and care has to be taken not to get flattened by a massive rockfall!

When you've collected the required number of diamonds an exit appears somewhere on the map. Find it and you've finished the level. And if you think it all sounds rather easy you'd be right. Even I was able to romp through the first few



See... Told you so. Now my eyes have gone all googly and I'm seeing stars. I guess I'd better practise my 'running away' skills.

levels but then it started to go horribly wrong. As the game progresses, monsters start appearing – usually in the most unhelpful places. Most of them spell instant death, but some creatures do their uses. Lure them under falling rocks and get crushed, releasing jewels!

There are also heaps of little tricks that you can learn as you go along. For instance, 'active walls turn boulders into diamonds an exploding monsters blow holes in walls allowing you to reach blocked-off sections of the maze. You'll no doubt discover your own secrets and strategies as you play.

I wouldn't be so bold as to say that this is the hardest game I've ever played – but it's p close. That said, I've rarely had so much f getting totally frustrated. You can scream, shc and make rude signs at Rockford, but once you've calmed down you'll still want to have another go! **ANDY**

TOTAL!



Graphics

■ It's all rather jolly: everything moves nicely and there's plenty of colour

Sounds

■ Sound effects are spot-on and the six world tunes are real toe-tappers!

Gameplay

■ It'll drive you bonkers, but at least you'll have heaps of fun going completely mad

Life span

■ 24 hideously difficult levels. A massive challenge and passwords keep it alive



He may be an old man but Rockford's looking better than ever. Smart graphics, masses of levels and a challenge bigger than, er, a very big thing.

Final rating
90
Percent

Booty and the beasts



That cute little blokey on the left is Rockford. The other guys are his worst enemies. They all kill him on contact and it's best to steer clear of the ones outlined in red. However, those outlined in yellow release diamonds when they get bouldered. Have a gander at the piccies below to see how you go about getting precious feasts from vicious beasts.

Amoeba



It multiplies and gets in your way

PuffPuff



Gracefully flits around, then kills you

TackyTacky



A spider? An Octopus? Who cares, it kills

FireFira



Has a sharp stick with your name on

FlapFlap



His spidery fangs'll be the death of you

BubbleBubble



This porky puffer fish will do you in

BuzzBuzz



A relative of BimBim, but weedier

PingPing



This character makes the Ice World deadly

BimBim



A nastier version of BuzzBuzz

GuriGuri



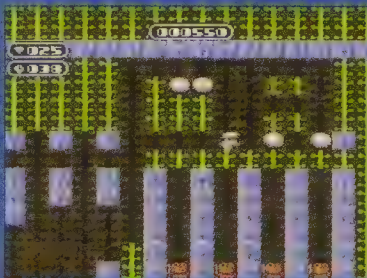
His legs give him a good turn of speed



1 Oh dear! I need 25 more diamonds, and there are none to be seen. Never fear.



2 All I have to do is make a trench under the boulders and dislodge them one at a time.



3 As they fall, I move around to the other side and position them above the PiroPiro.



4 Then all I do is run across and... Ta-Daa! The crushed monsters turn into diamonds!

They are in a cold, dark room. The stone walls are covered in a vile tapestry of moss and cobwebs. Burning torches pierce the darkness and you can see a large oak door in front of you. It opens and a wizard walks in. 'Welcome to the dungeons of Gauntlet,' he says. 'I am Merlin. Before you can leave you must face many traps and find two men. One is the mighty Ja-rat, the other is the all-seeing Thee-*ay*. Good luck.' Merlin disappears in a puff of acrid smoke. Turn to page 32.

GAUNTLET II



For NES
(1-4 players)

From
Mindscape

Price £40

Now, come on. You must have heard of Atari's massive ground-breaking (or should that be floor-breaking?) four-player arcade machine, Gauntlet. This coin-op caused a real stir when it was wheeled into amusement arcades and seedy cafes up and down the country. The mixture of mindless monster mashing, maze exploration, treasure collecting, problem solving and superb simultaneous four-player fun

ensured its place in the arcade history books.

There are no prizes for guessing that Atari's arcade division (now called Tengen) quickly followed it up with Gauntlet II, which had more of the same – only better!

Given that the machine had four independent characters, vast amounts of enemies, smooth eight-way scrolling and digitised speech, you'd expect the NES version to be a bit ropey. And in truth it's not

good. It's not even very good. It's utterly brilliant!

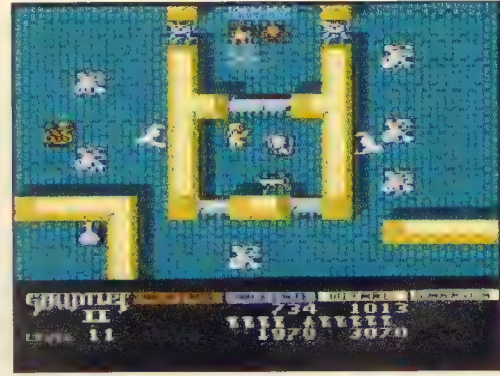
You could hear chins hitting the floor all round when this game pak got up and running. It's all there – and I'm not talking about a similar-sort-of-thing all there, or a missing-a-few-bits-but quite-good all there. Heck, it's *all there*. Digitised speech, smooth scrolling, zillions of baddies and, thanks to the Four Score multi-joypad adaptor, four-players. On screen. At once.



The dark criss-cross patterns on the floor are sort of electrified force fields. If you're stood on one when they light up, you will too!



'Ooh! What's that noise coming from behind those doors. Could be a trapped kitty – I'd better get a key and check.' (Sad old Merlin.)



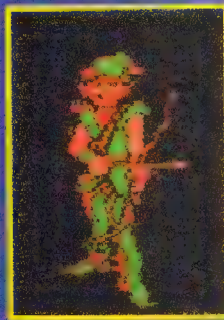
Open the door, will you? No way, I opened it last time. Look, do it or I'll turn you into a Sega. Tell you what, I'll open the door shall I?

The gang of four



Merlin the Wizard

Merly doesn't have any armour, but his shot power is good. Don't use him in hand-to-hand combat or against generators – he hasn't got any weapons and he'll get wasted. No, what big M needs to kick monster butt are magic potions. Then he makes Paul Daniels look like Sooty.



Questor the Elf

A regular Robin Hood. However, his bow-and-arrow is a poor weapon against monsters and his posh leather tunic offers only minor defence. With just a weeny dagger for hand-to-hand combat, he can't destroy generators either. (Blimey, what a twonk!) Like the wiz his strength lies in magic. (Ah... Sorry.)



Thyra the Valkyrie

Thyra's sword and shield makes her a worthy opponent in close quarters combat. She can't chuck her sword very well, so shot power is poor, but her shield stops a third of all attacks (good thing too with only her underwear on!). She's great at using magic too. What a gall!

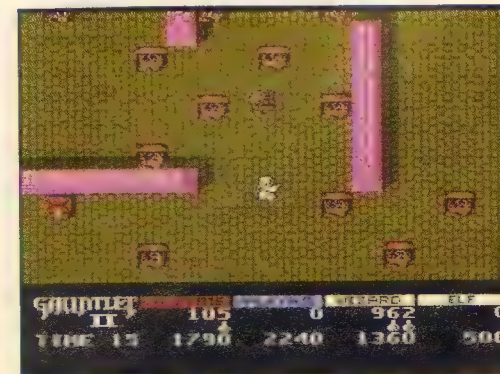


Thor the Warrior

He's the barbarian equivalent of Thick Dyer, but cleaves through enemies like a hot axe through the butter monster of Lur-Pak. His shot power is double everyone else's, his hand-to-hand is awesome and his tough skin soaks up damage. However, he can't cast a magic spell to save his life.



Who can that man in the dark suit be? Darth Vader perhaps? The Traffic Warden of Doom? No, 'tis none other than Death himself. Eek!



Dungeoneer's delight: a room filled with nowt but treasure! Find the exit before the timer hits zero, though, or else you get zilch.

TREASURES

Outstanding digitised speech and ultra-smooth screen movement. Each level has its own surprises! Unbelievably good four-player action using the Four Score adaptor. Huge, huge quest – 100 levels plus a few secret ones!

With so many players beetling around, things do get a little confusing – especially when you're all using the transporters! But even without an awesome foursome, you can still have a real hoot exploring the 100 dungeon levels of Gauntlet II.

There's plenty to see and do, and just when you think things are getting a bit stale, the dungeons play yet another trick on you. You're just about to use the exit – and the thing disap-



Here's our intrepid foursome all together. Thor (in red) is showing off his reflective shots, while the others run for cover!

TRAPS

Enter the dungeons alone and things aren't quite as exciting. With infinite continues, your first group quest can last hours. A password entry system would avoid having to play through the early levels each time

pears. Shoot certain sections of wall and it crumbles away. Touch the 'It' monster and suddenly you're playing a deadly game of tag!

Not only does Gauntlet II play well, but it looks and sounds rock solid. The visuals are amazing, from super-slick scrolling to dozens of animated monsters to gorgeous colour schemes. And the sound... Well, I never thought the NES could sound so impressive. All the spot effects have been ripped right out of the arcade machine and the speech (like, 'Warrior needs food, badly') really adds to the atmosphere.

One downer is that while solo players have just one life, recently-deceased team members can re-join their party again and again. This acts like unlimited continues and you could well find yourself battling deep into the dungeons on your first attempt. The saving grace is that many exits bypass great chunks of the game. Only the most dedicated adventurers are going to see every level!

If you've got the NES Four Score adaptor (and enough friends to fill the joypads) then Gauntlet II should be high on your wish list. Invite a couple of buddies round and have a dungeon party! **STEVE**

TOTAL!

Looks ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ Incredibly pretty backdrops and all the characters are beautifully detailed

Sounds ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ Almost exactly the same as the arcade machine – who could ask for more?

Gameplay ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ Simple, but un-put-downable. There's a great urge to see what's on the next level!

Life span ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ Could do with a little more variety, but it's good for a monster bash any old time!

As-near-as-dammit arcade-perfect. Technically superb and terrific fun with a group of friends. Delve into the dungeons, but don't go alone!

Final rating
88
Percent

Dungeons and dragon(s)

A door (yes, I know it looks like a flippin' wall!). Collect a key and then walk into the door (wall) to open it

In this game even some parts of the floor are dangerous – stand on this when it's lit and you get electri-fried

Eek! It's a flippin' dragon beastie of the fire-spitting species. Shoot it whilst carefully avoiding the fireballs (tricky) or run away (pretty easy and extremely safe)



A treasure chest of the open variety

Don't panic! These ghosts are weeds – one hit and they're history

One of the many crumbly walls you'll find around the dungeons – shoot 'em and they fall to bits

A treasure chest of the closed variety

A key. Collect this to open one of the doors – you know, those long blue things that look like walls (see above). You can only carry a few so don't hog them all

The white wizard (hoorah!) and above him the red valkyrie (phwoar!... Er, I mean hoorah!). The warrior was feeling a bit poorly and the elf's mum said it was getting a bit too dark so they weren't allowed out

The Grunt household. This pleasant three bedroomed detached house is home to Bobby and Sheila Grunt and their son Damon. They're a violent bunch, so no-one will complain if you raze their house down to the ground!

SKATE OR DIE

For NES
(1-2 players)

**From Palcom Software/
Konami**

Price £25

The first problem with this game is its outrageous title. You're never in any danger of getting killed during play, so a more appropriate name might be Skate Or Scrape Your Knees A Bit.

Gameplay is very much in the vein of Konami's Track And Field arcade machine, except that instead of taking part in conventional athletic

sporting activities you need to prove your worth on a skateboard. You get to partake in such bizarre events as the Jam (whizzing through filthy streets while trying to punch another skateboarder's lights out) and the Joust (blatting your opponent on the head with a stick in an empty swimming pool).

Having said that, you can also take part in more traditional skateboarding events like the down

hill Race, half pipe High Jump and Freestyle.

Each event uses a different joystick control. The High Jump is a test of stamina requiring frantic waggling of the joystick. (In fact it's such hard work you might be wise to use a 'proper' joystick like the NES Advantage - see the feature on pages 8-9).

The Freestyle event also takes place in a half pipe. Here you need to maintain your speed by



I've never done this before... It looks a bit scary. I wonder if there's a beginners' slope - this one doesn't half look steep. Why do they call this the 'Race', there's no-one else on the track? Oh well, here goe- Woaaaah! Blinkin' 'eck, this thing's a bit wobbly!



Hey! I'm not doing too bad here, although that fork was a bit confusing. I hope I've gone the right way. Ah. Why are all the flags on the other bit of road? Hmm... Well never mind, I'm getting a bit good at this skateboarding lark now.



Oh no... OH NO! Wah! Who put that jump there?! Let me doowwnn! At this point, the editorial staff of TOTAL! magazine would like to say that the next picture has been withheld on the grounds that it was a bit, um, messy. Sorry.

Five ways to die!

From the central skateboard shop, you can choose to practice one of the five events or compete in the whole lot. To pick an event, just steer your skateboarder down the right road and he'll reappear, ready to 'gleam the cube'.

Freestyle

Perform some rad-type moves in the half-pipe. The wilder your stunts, the higher your score!

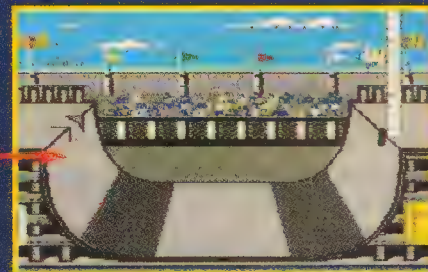
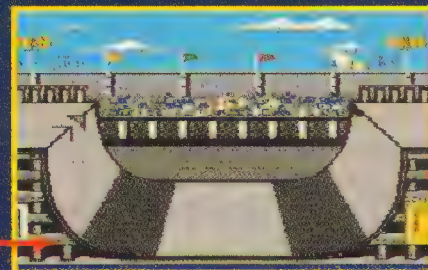


Joust

Try to make your opponent 'bite the pool' by bashing him on the head with a stick (!)

Race

It's just you against the clock on this (slightly dull) downhill course



High Jump

Waggle the joystick to build up speed, then catapult yourself skyward for high points!

Jam

Battle another skateboarder as you speed down this urban racetrack

pressing the A button repeatedly. As you reach the lip of the pipe, you can perform one of nine stunts by hitting different joystick directions/A button combinations. The manual goes into great detail on how to perform the stunts but both memorising and mastering them all takes time (well it did me anyway).

The Joust (head-hitting swimming pool business) is a reet good laff. Two players take part either head-to-head or head-to-NES. One has a paddle and the other has nothing. The paddle-wielder tries to make his opponent 'bite the pool' by belting him around the

head with the paddle. If his opponent manages to survive five skate-pasts the roles are reversed and the round continues. The winner is the first one to be two wins ahead at the end of any round.

Well that's the interesting events covered. The last two are both downhillers and both disappointing. The Race pits your skills against the clock, while Jam has you up against an opponent, either human or NES.

Race is challenging at first, but get the hang of the controls and it doesn't take long before you master the simple course. After that it's tedium city.

At first sight the Jam event looks a bit more interesting because you have to race through streets and alleys against another skater. Get close enough, and you can even kick or punch them off their 'board! Unfortunately, the NES opponent is hopeless. You'll beat him first (and every) time you play so it's a bit of a wasted opportunity.

Each event has its own soundtrack, and they're all excellent – especially the title tune. The effects are pretty hot too.

It may sound good, but with three decent events out of five, Skate Or Die only comes into its own when you challenge some chums to the full competition – and even then it's only good for a few plays. Solo skateboarders should definitely skate clear of this one.

ANDY

FREEWHEELERS

Three of the five events are pretty entertaining.

Lots of nice moves in the Freestyle event

WIPEOUTS

Events run hot and cold, and the boring ones bring it all down. Visuals are on the weedy side with small skateboarders and plain backdrops



This blue-haired dweeb is the owner of the Skate Shop. You have to sign-in here before you can compete in events. You can also view the high scores or indulge in some idle chit-chat (about skateboarding and hair-dos, unfortunately).

TOTAL!

Looks

Nowt special. There's some nice animation during Freestyle but that's about it

Sounds

There's a great tune for each event and the sound effects are well over the top!

Gameplay

Events are generally over too quickly, and the controls can be awkward

Life span

Try out all the events three times and you'll want to play something else

If I had the choice is between skating or dying it'd be a close-run thing. There are certainly better ways to spend your NES playing time

Final rating
52
Percent

Jammy dodger

With two screens joined at the edges, we can show you a sneaky manoeuvre to guarantee your success in the Jam...

This blokey is the guy you're racing. He's obviously stupid (or blind!) 'cos he's heading straight for that fence. Unless he turns sharpish, he'll come out like *chips*!

This'll be you then. You've gone around the fence only to be greeted by the sight of a flippin' great building approaching at high speed. Now (and this is the tacticcy bit) instead of taking the long route by steering around the building, hug the wall on your left and head straight for it! Go on – you won't get blatted. Honest!

This is the flippin' great building. Go as fast as you can and try and hit it where the point of this arrow ends. Everything will be all right! Trust us, would we lie to you?

Watch with glee as your stupid opponent stupidly goes the long way around (stupid creature!)

See! As if by magic you appear here 'cos it's one of those drivey-throughy garage-type things. Brill innit?



BUBBLE BOBBLE

This was your dumb idea, Thicky. I feel like a right flongy in this suit. I mean, just how street credible are we going to be dressed up as dinosaaAAAAHH!!



For NES (1-2 players)

From Taito

Price £25

M eet Bub 'n' Bob - two bouncy, bubble-blowing brontosaurus buddies. Bub and Bob live happily in a magical forest full of danger and delight where everything is good to eat and cheery, cheeky dinosaurs bounce and play in peace. As you've probably guessed by now, 1) this is a jolly, bubbly 'cutesy' game and 2) the designers are a right bunch of wierdos.

One day Bub and Bob were busy doing their bouncy, eaty, happy stuff when the evil Baron Von Blubba sneaked into the magic forest, captured their girlfriendosaurus, Betty and Patty, and whisked them away to his lair.

Fortunately, Bub and Bob are breezy, brave, bold Brontosaurus, and immediately set off for the Baron's 'Cave of Monsters'

on a mission to rescue their loved ones.

Unfortunately for our prehistoric partners, the Cave of Monsters is, surprisingly enough, full of monsters. Hordes of Von Blubba's minions roam around and their sole aim in life is to kill horribly cute dinosaurs. There's Bubble Buster, Willy Whistle, Hullaballoon and Super Socket to name but a few (I mean, who thinks up this stuff?). The slightest touch from any of them leaves Bub and

Bob wishing they hadn't got up this morning.

Each cave (well, level) is a single screen which slides into view once the previous level is completed. Bub and Bob can jump around on the platforms and blocks until they go red in the face, but they can only leave that level once all of Von Blubba's baddies have been defeated. And the only way to do this is to enclose each of them in a bubble and burst it with their sharp spines.

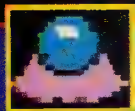
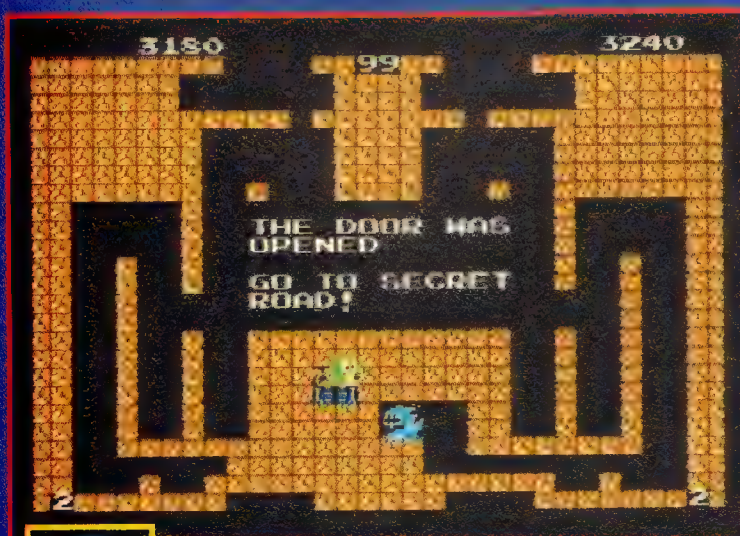
As the bubble bursts, the baddie goes bouncing around the screen, eventually landing as a piece of fruit or veg (man, these people are seriously wacko!). Bub and Bob can then collect the munchies for extra points.

Beware, though, for if the monster escapes his bubbly bonds, they're not best

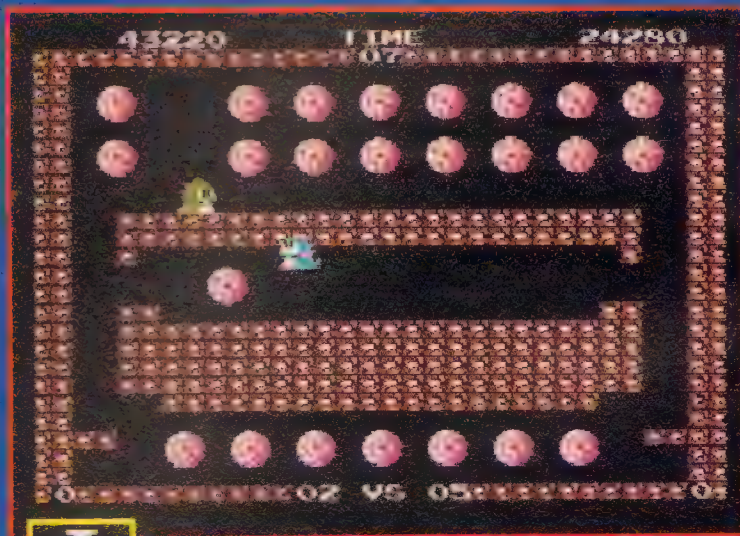
BUBBLERS
Arcade-perfect: colourful and incredibly busy. Simultaneous two-player action is kickin' Every screen has its own surprises!

BLUBBAS
Password system is too good! You can finish all 226 screens in one day. And the mindlessly jolly soundtrack will drive you bonkers before then!

Collectibubbles



CRYSTAL BALL Before you can venture into the second half of the quest you have to collect the Crystal Ball on level 99 (it appears just below the 'T' in 'SECRET', and you have to be quick because it disappears pretty flippin' sharpish!) Once the Crystal Ball is safely in your possession, a door opens allowing you to enter the Super Bubble Bobble game. Fail, and you might end up defeating Grumple Grommit, only to be told 'Bad Ending' and being sent back to the beginning. (Er... Like we did).



BONUS BOTTLE Very, very occasionally the Bonus Bottle appears. If you can collect the thing before it disappears, you benefit in two ways: 1) You enter a bonus round where both Bub and Bob race against each other to pick up the bonus... erm... blobs. Collect them all and you get, like, mega points. And 2) By doing this it automatically clears the screen. Once you've finished the bonus round, you move straight on to the next level. Oh yes, a wonderful little gizmo and no small error.



By bursting the water bubbles, you can release a stream of liquid which flows rapidly down-screen washing away any baddies it touches (like at the bottom of the heart).

pleased at this attack and race around the screen red-faced and determined to destroy dinosaurs.

To liberate Betty and Patty, Bub and Bob have to work their way through 226 levels (actually, it's



Frying tonight! Bub makes monster omelette by bursting the bubbles of fire. Be careful, though, they singe dinosaurs just as easily!



These lightning bubbles are useful for zapping meanies that refuse to come out in the open. Just remember to face away from the way you want the lightning to go!

just the first 113 levels played twice but with different meanies and colour schemes). At the half-way mark and at the end of their quest they must face and defeat the evil, hideous guardian Grumple Grommit! (So where's Blubba, eh?)

This probably sounds like a pretty tough mission, but even partnered by Thick Dyer I still managed to finish the entire game in one day. The problem is that the game provides infinite continues plus passwords for every level except the guardians. No single level is that difficult to finish, so it's only a question of time before you reach the big bosses (who are difficult to beat!)

Still, Bubble Bobble is tremendous fun with two players and even though you can finish it quickly, I'm sure you won't mind getting it out to have a brief bubble-blowing beast-bash any old time. **STEVE**

TOTAL!

Looks [10 bars, 9 green, 1 red]

■ Colourful, detailed and incredibly busy with masses of sprites on-screen! Great

Sounds [10 bars, 9 green, 1 red]

■ Jolly arcade sounds are faithfully reproduced, but they're really nothing special

Gameplay [10 bars, 9 green, 1 red]

■ Frantic two-player action. Once you've bubbled a baddie, you'll be hooked!

Life span [10 bars, 9 green, 1 red]

■ You can visit all 226 levels in one day, but you'll probably do it again. And again.



Spoiled by too many continues and passwords, but still more playable than the contents of a large jar marked 'Danger! Playable substances!'.

Final rating
80
Percent

Grappling Grumple Grommit



On level 103 you meet the first major guardian - a massive great meanie by the name of Grumple Grommit. GG bounces around the screen lobbing bottle-shaped objects and generally acting like a real jerk. Defeating mister Grommit is no easy task since normal bubbles do as much damage as, well, bubbles. To make any impression on this dude, you have to jump up to the lightning bottles at the top

of the screen. Bub and Bob are then able to spit lightning bubbles themselves. As the bubbles burst they hurl lightning bolts across the screen and these do make Grumple grumpy. However, on your first meeting you have to hit him 60 times. This is no small feat, so imagine our horror when we met him in the final showdown only to be told that he could soak up 80 hits! (We still got 'im though!)

TOTAL!
TACTIX

Grumple first moves to the top left of the screen, so Bub has to get to his bottle and get down - quick! It's quite easy to defeat GG on your own, by just moving back and forth across the floor. Watch his pattern carefully and always try to stay behind him. This can often mean nipping underneath him and dodging his bottles. As he approaches ground level, face the wall, jump and bubble like crazy! Be patient and you'll win.



Hurrah! Got 'im. Now don't do what we did first time round. Having bubbled the brute, Andy and I sat back and shouted and squealed with delight - and forgot to pop the bubble! He escaped and duffed us up a treat. Nerds.

You remember Bart's strange words, 'Eat my shorts!' So you do just that. Apart from feeling slightly sick (and totally ridiculous), you don't really suffer from the experience. 'Blast my foolishness! Fancy eating a pair of shorts,' you think to yourself. But then you notice some-thing very odd. The small table is now a very large table indeed and the tiny door that you couldn't get through now towers above you. You've shrunk! A wave of relief washes over you and you set off through the door to continue with your adventure. Turn to page 20.

TOTAL! TACTIX

If you play NES or Game Boy, come here for your tips, tricks and tactics!



We thought we'd kick off with some advice on Super Mario Bros., since every NES owner has it! Check out the high-scoring tactics, and then take our mega short-cut to world 8-1!

SECRET CONTINUE OPTION

Battling through all eight worlds of Super Mario Bros. (without cheating!) is a bit of a tall order, so this little trick should help you out. When Mario loses his last life, hold down the A button and press Start to continue on the first level of the last world you were on. For instance, if Mario died on world 3-3, he starts again on 3-1. Great!

SUPER MARIO BROS.

EXTRA MARIOS!



1 At the end of world 3-1, wait for two Koopas to walk down these steps and kill the first. When the second one reaches the last but one step, jump on him. Be careful not to hit him twice and send him whizzing off!

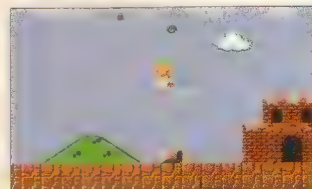


2 With the turtle shell belly-down on the step (it only works that way), jump up from the step below. Mario kicks the shell against the wall, and then lands on it again to stop it. You'll earn an extra Mario for every kick, but don't pick up more than a hundred, otherwise the NES throws a wobbler and resets them to zero!

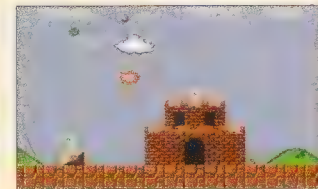
MYSTERY OF THE FIREWORKS



1 Stand on the far left of the block. Hold down button B and wait until the last digit on the timer changes into a '9'. As soon as it does, run and jump.



2 It takes three game seconds to make the jump, so Mario hits the flag pole as the last digit turns to a '6'. You get 5,000 points for the big jump.



3 The '6' on the timer releases six fireworks at 500 points apiece! The same thing applies to '1' and '3' on the timer, for one and three fireworks!

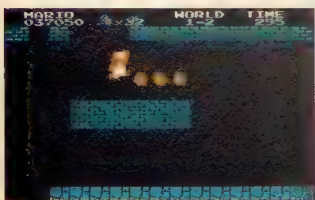
SHORT-CUT TO WORLD 8!

WORLD 1-1

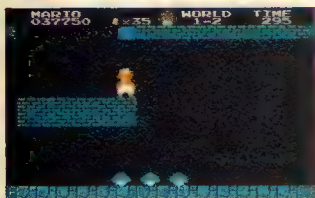


Well for starters, you may as well pick up this secret extra life. Jump over the four green pipes, and after the fourth one, walk six blocks away. Jump straight up and you'll reveal a hidden block containing a 1-up mushroom! Collect it and carry on down to world 1-2.

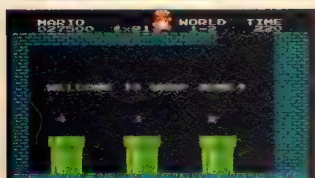
WORLD 1-2 WARP TO 4-1



1 In world 1-2 walk along until you reach this group of blocks (you'll have to run and jump from a small platform on the left). Jump up and smash a couple of the blocks directly above.

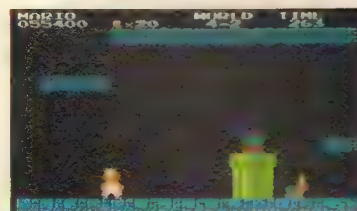


2 The block above the right end of the platform releases a 1-up mushroom. As soon as it appears, quickly run to the left of the platform and do a big jump (button A + B) up onto the ceiling to get it.

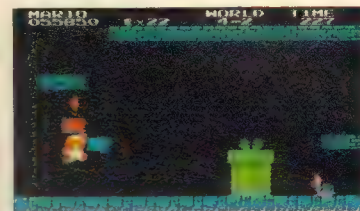


3 Carry on running. You'll have to jump over an elevator or two, but stay up on the ceiling. Eventually you'll pass over the exit and enter the secret warp room. Drop down the pipe to world 4!

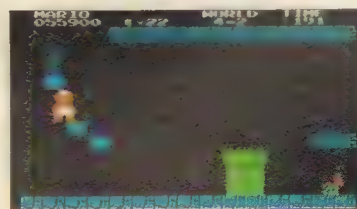
WORLD 4-2 WARP TO WORLD 8-1



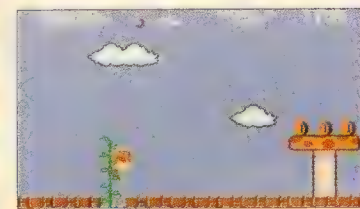
1 Complete world 4-1 (easy) and enter 4-2. When you reach this point, stand six tiles away from the green pipe and jump to reveal a secret block.



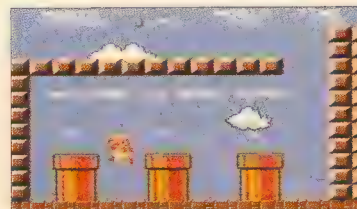
2 Step one tile left and jump once more to reveal another secret block (plus a few coins). Move right and jump up onto this new block.



3 Stand on the left edge and head-butt the block diagonally up/left. It releases some climbing ivy - so climb it!



4 Jump off the ivy. Collect a few coins and climb up the stairs to the exit. Drop down through the gap...



5 And there it is! One mega monster warp to world 8! Sorry guys, from here on in you're on your own. But one last word of advice: don't hang around on world 8-1, the time limit is a killer! Good luck!



Mario's mini Game Boy adventure has been around for a while. So even though we review it on page 68, we thought we'd give you a few pointers on this wonderful little arcade platform rompy thing.

The shots on this page show the locations of hidden lives, power-ups and blocks, which can make your adventure last that little bit longer. Baghead

has only managed to squeeze in the goodies for worlds 1 and 2, so why not join us next month, when we'll be covering 3 and 4?



3 World 1-2. Look out for this little platform early on. Stand on the left hand side and jump to reveal an invisible block and a secret 1-up heart!



4 At the start of world 1-3 there's a secret elevator to the ceiling! When you drop back down, the first tall pipe with a flower leads to a bonus room.



7 Later on there's a turtle above two narrow passages. Bop the green-back, walk over the ledge and step back underneath for a secret cache of coins.



8 Just afterwards, there's a corridor with a double row of blocks. Head-butt the top block, third from the right, to reveal a secret power-up.



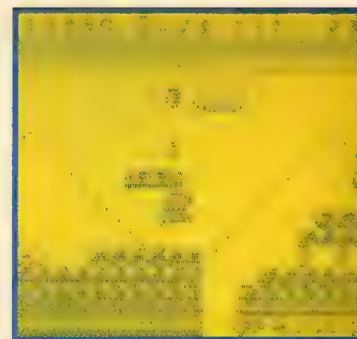
11 After the dragons, jump on the elevator. Smash the bonus block, then hit the one above for a 1-up heart! Jump right into the coins to get it.



12 World 2-2. This invisible walkway lets small Mario go under the platform. Up above, the 16th and 32nd blocks hold an invincibility star and a power-up.



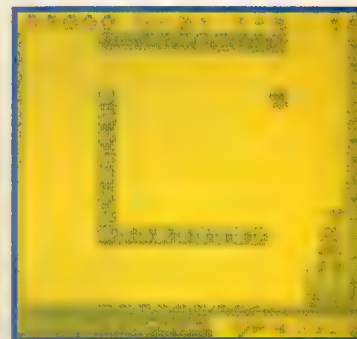
1 World 1-1. Not too far into this level there's a secret 1-up heart. Stand on the bonus block and jump across to headbutt the fourth block along.



2 Get ready to collect some extra coins in the third block after the sphinx. HINT: To collect the coins in the narrow gap, try shooting at them!



5 Just before the first sphinx, there's a second elevator. Smash the fourth block, then jump up into the gap. Run along the ceiling and enter the pipe...



6 Once you've cleared the coins, smash all the blocks in the right hand column. Take a big run-up and hit the top right block for a secret 1-up heart!



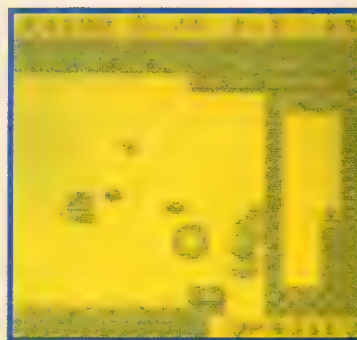
9 World 2-1. After the first big tower, there's a secret power-up block. Drop down and stand on the left edge. Jump and get ready to catch the goodies!



10 The second pipe in world 2-1 leads to a bonus room. Don't panic! There's a secret block hidden on the far right of the screen.



13 The next bonus pipe leads to this room. Don't panic (again)! There's a hidden block 15 tiles from the right. Erm... And four from the left.



14 World 2-3. Towards the end of the level, shoot blocks near the bottom of the screen for a power-up. This will help you survive against Zamasu!

You run west into a smallish room, no bigger than a cupboard. There are buttons on the wall and you suddenly realise that you are in a lift. You press all the buttons in a panic and the lift starts to move up. Phew! You have escaped the ghosts. After a couple of minutes the lift changes direction and starts moving horizontally. Eventually it descends again and comes to rest in the torture chamber. You have very foolishly used the torturer's personal lift and must pay the price. As you can imagine, your end is slow and grisly. Page 6 time again!

You pull the lever and a door clicks open in front of you. You walk through and find yourself in an extensive armoury. Swords, spears and other combat articles are hanging on the walls. You pick up one of the swords and, as you do so, a group of four heavily-armed skeletons enters the room. They hiss a warning at you. 'No one touches our weapons! Prepare to die, stranger.' Do you attack with your sword (page 69)? Do you run for your life (page 76)? Or do you sing them a song in the hope that they might grow to like you (page 37)?

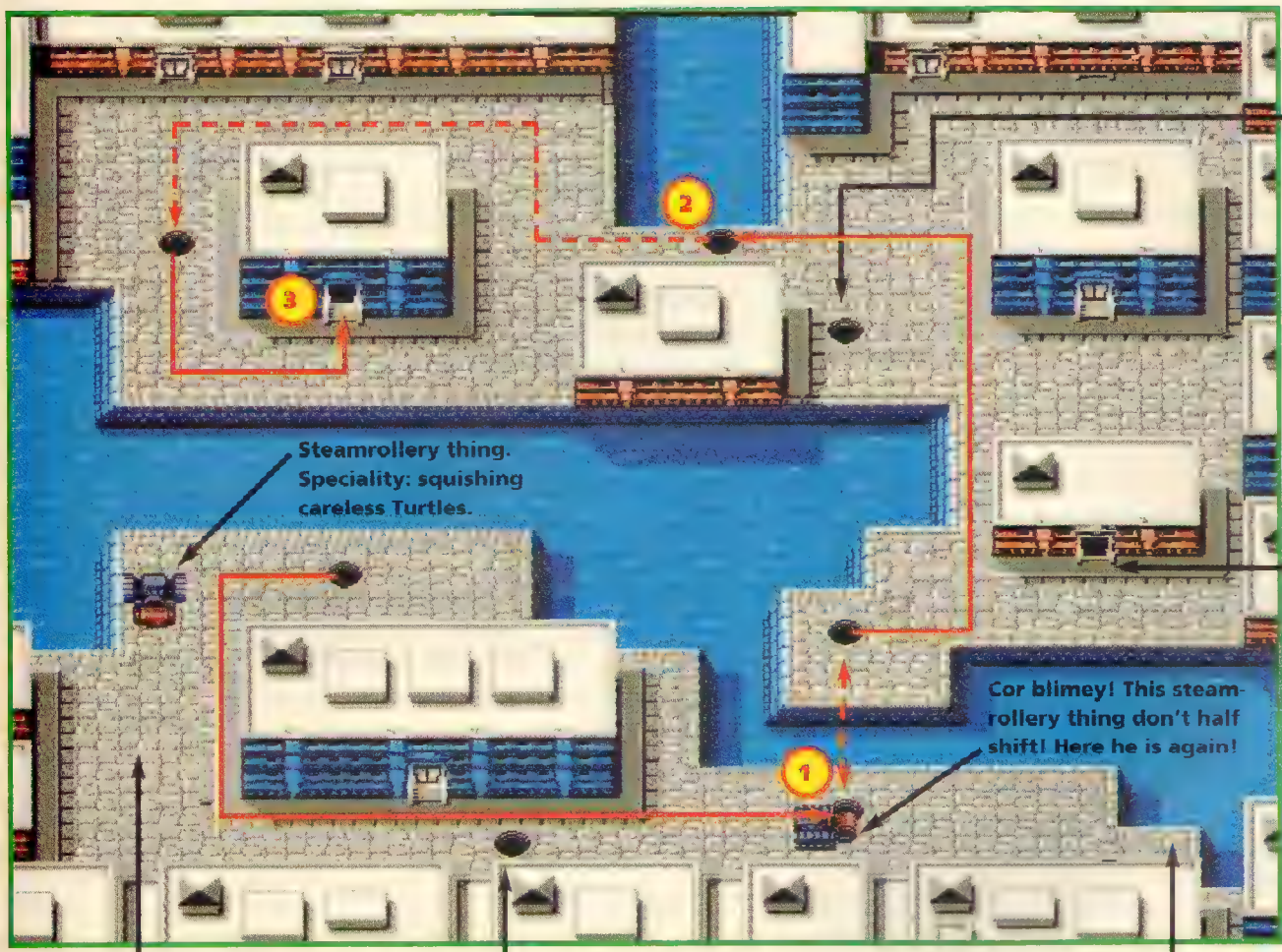


Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles

TACTIC If you've just had the NES Turtles pack, you'll no doubt need a bit of help getting started with this sprawling beat 'em up. Here we've provided a few

short cuts to get you on Shredder's trail. However, we'll be continuing with the Turtle adventure in the next issue, so if you discover your own tips and tactics, send

'em in! You never know, you just might win a prize! Anyway, let's get straight into level one. The red line is the quickest route to the end of the level - so take it!



This tunnel is a dead end. It does contain some goodies (extra weapons, that sort of gubbins) but it's really not worth the hassle. (Unless you're a bit dim and after a severe pasting.)

This is vile. You battle through mutant spiders, Footclan soldiers and chainsaw-wielding psychos, just to get... A measly slice of pizza. For-get it!

Steamrollery thing. Speciality: squishing careless Turtles.

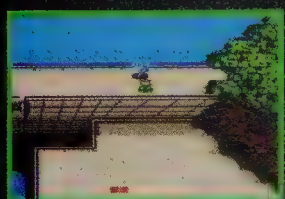
Cor blimey! This steamrollery thing don't half shift! Here he is again!

A wide open space. this would be the perfect spot for a street party or a big barbecue. Or maybe even an impromptu 'theatre' thing. Erm... Yes.

If you go down the very first manhole, this is where you'll end up. Big deal, huh? It's quicker and easier to walk around the building! Well, as long as the steamrollers of doom don't get you first.

A very small space. Not really much good for anything, apart from maybe keeping your bike here. Or some planks, p'raps.

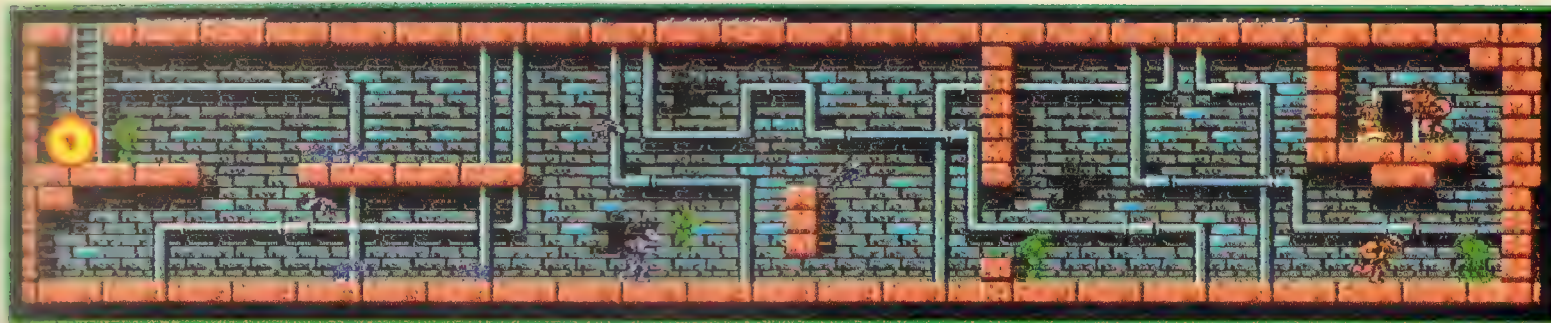
The swimmy bit!



On rushing the dam, the Turtles take turns in trying to defuse the eight explosive devices. With our handy-dandy not-very-portable-at-all map, you should be able to find your way round this deadly under-water cavern. We've numbered the time bombs so that you know which order it's best to defuse them in.

These spinny wotsits aren't too tricky to avoid. Keep tapping gently to maintain speed and don't panic.

Worst part of the whole level. This channel is full of deadly weed. Without full energy, you won't make it!

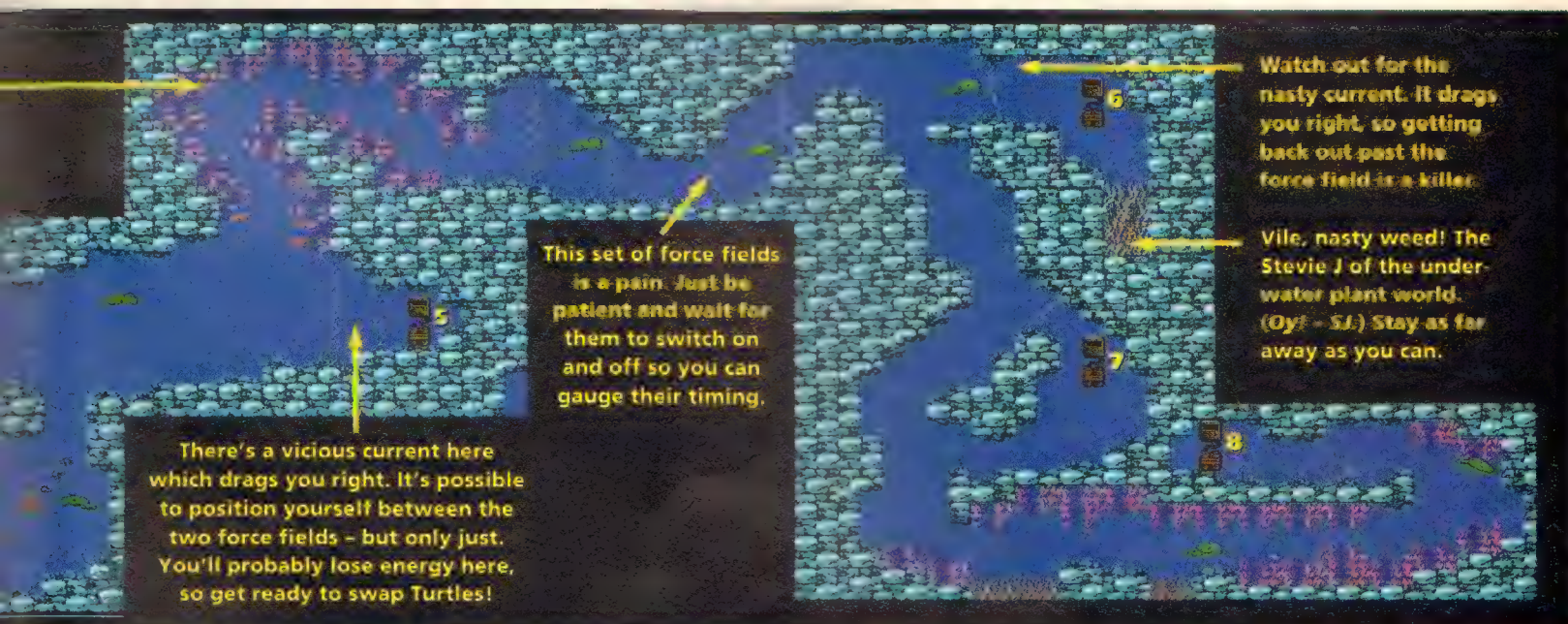


1 Once you get to the far right, you'll see Bebop with April. As Rocksteady charges at you, jump over him, turn round and follow him right. He charges straight into the wall, where you can hit him from behind and defeat him without losing any energy.

2 Useful pizza tip! Enter the sewer at this point, and you'll see some energy-replacing pizza. However, you can actually leave and re-enter the sewer as many times as you like, and the pizza is always there for the taking. You can power up all four Turtles if you need to!

3 Move to the far right and climb the ladder. Wait at the top (as in the picture) until the Foot Soldier jumps over you to the right. Now you can climb up onto the floor and attack him without getting hurt!

The final battle with Rocksteady is very tricky indeed, because he charges quickly and there's little room to manoeuvre. Short-range weapons are near useless. That's why you need to have Donatello – at full strength – to defeat him. Of course, if it looks like Don's going to get wasted, hit Start and select another Turtle!



Watch out for the nasty current. It drags you right, so getting back out past the force field is a killer.

Vile, nasty weed! The Stevie J of the underwater plant world. (Oy! - SJ.) Stay as far away as you can.

This set of force fields is a pain. Just be patient and wait for them to switch on and off so you can gauge their timing.

There's a vicious current here which drags you right. It's possible to position yourself between the two force fields – but only just. You'll probably lose energy here, so get ready to swap Turtles!

A carrot? says Tony, 'boy, I love carrots.' Tom hands you the gun as promised and gives you the advice. That Chessmaster guy. He's the best chess player in the Universe. In fact he's so obsessed with the game he has over 3,000 sets. He told you any different he's lying. In fact, take anything he says with a pinch of salt. Thanks for the carrot kid, see ya.' Tom leaps back into his plane and flies off into the sunset. But your adventure isn't over yet. Another glowing door appears, so you walk through to continue your quest. Turn to page 40.



Golf

If you perform a mind-numbingly shoddy shot, don't hesitate. Just press Select, Start, button

A and button B all at the same time to reset the Game Boy. Then, when you select the Continue option, you'll be back at the start of the hole you messed up on. Now is that sneaky or what?



Batman

This little cheat is completely useless but a bit of a laff anyway. When the game tells you to

press start, push up and right on the joypad then press Start. You have entered the sound test and can now listen to all the groovy sound effects and music by selecting them with the joypad.



Castlevania Adventure

On the first level, when you get to the fifth rope, climb up it but don't jump off

at the top. Instead you can carry on up through the bricks until you reach a secret room laden with heaps of bonus goodies!



Oh no! Simon Belmont is climbing that rope far too quickly – will he be able to stop at the top? Or will he smash his skull in on the rocky overhang?

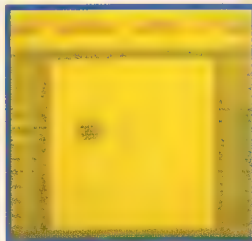
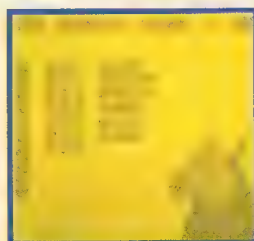


Ah... So that's what he was doing! The sneaky chap has entered a secret room to collect an extra life and some useful energy-type stuff. Cool!



Snake Rattle N Roll

As soon as you appear from the doorway at the start of level one, push right on the joypad and travel in a straight line to the end of the level (remembering to jump the hazards of course). If you do it right and get to the end quick enough you'll see a space rocket taking off. Jump towards it and you get warped to level eight (the really rather pleasant swimmy one).



Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles Fall Of The Foot Clan

As well as the five main levels in the game there are also three bonus games to be found. If you can't be bothered to try and find 'em, use this cheat. When you get to the screen that lets you select a level, press and hold the select button, then press buttons A and B at the same time. A little question mark will appear. If you select this you can play the three bonus games individually. Game one is Guess The Secret Number; game two is Take The Shurikens and game three is Shoot The Targets.



Bubble Bobble

Enter the password as KGJB and you'll be on the last level.

Not only that, but by pushing the joypad left and right you can play any level!

We want your tips!

And we're prepared to pay handsomely for original tips, tricks and tactics. Send 'em in to: TOTAL! Tactix, TOTAL! 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW. The best tactix each issue will receive some goodies!



Side Pocket

We've got a groovy tipette for this one. When a star appears over one of the pockets, rebound the cue ball off a cushion and into the pocket with the star. The remaining balls are then placed right over the pockets, making it a piece of cake to pot them all and achieve a whopping great bonus. Neato!



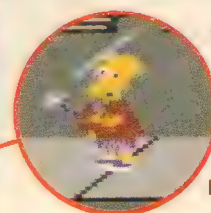
Tennis

When you're serving, tap button A once to start the serve. When it goes as high as it's going to, press A again so that you swing and miss it. Then quickly move your player slightly right so that the ball lands on his head. Does the crowd laugh at you? Does the umpire shout 'Fault'? No, you win the point every time.



The Simpsons

On level one, make your way far right and shoot a rocket at the 'E' in the Quick-E-Mart sign. Sounds silly, but not only do you get extra lives but you can also mess around with the sound test too. If that's not enough, be sure to get the next issue of TOTAL! 'cos we'll be doing more tips for the game.



Stand on the crack in the paving slabs opposite the supermarket window to be sure of a direct hit on the sign. Light up and hope!



The rocket should hit the 'E' in the middle of the sign. A Krusty the clown icon is released – and hey presto, extra lives!

This room is much the same as the last one. Again, the floor is wooden and the walls stone. There are expensive-looking paintings on the walls and a huge rug with an embroidered carrot sits on the floor. You can hear music coming from a vent in the ceiling. It's a jaunty little tune and quite familiar. At the end of the piece a squeaky little voice says, 'Heh, heh, heh... Th-th-that's all folks!' And with that the room falls silent. Exits lead east and south. If east looks good turn to page 42. Should you fancy a trip southwards turn to page 15.

Review info

This is the important bit – the game reviews. Every review goes into a lot of detail on what each game is actually about. But if you want to know quickly what the good and bad points are, check the 'thumbs up' and 'thumbs down'. These will give you a good idea of the game's merits and any major faults that we've found. But that's not all...



GOOD THINGS

If we think there are any particularly nice features in the game we'll bung 'em in here



BAD THINGS

If there's anything outstandingly bad about the game then we'll jolly well say so here

... If you want the *full* low down on the game, look at the TOTAL! ratings box. It breaks down and rates the looks, sounds, gameplay and life span of each game. The meters rate from 0 to 10. The more green squares, the better the rating. Of course, lots of red means bad news! Have a gander at the one below to see what we mean.

Looks

■ What are the graphics like? Is it an oil painting in pixels, or doggie-doo in dots?

Sounds

■ Do you want to rush out and buy the 12" re-mix? Or just reach for the volume?

Gameplay

■ Good graphics and sound are nice, but this is what counts. How much fun is it?

Life span

■ What if you can finish it in a day? Great gameplay is no good without a long life.

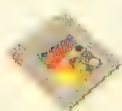
This is where me and Steve get to sum up. You can tell exactly what we think about a game just by reading this bit and looking at the rating!

Final rating
87
Percent

This month!

F-1 Race

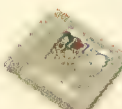
Page 62



Speedy four-player Formula One racing. You're never too 'tired' for this!

Robocop

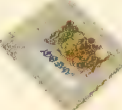
Page 63



Officer Murphy struts his funky stuff in this stomp around and blast 'em up.

Fall Of The Foot Clan

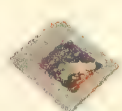
Page 64



The Teenage Turtles are back! Mean, green and on your screen.

R-Type

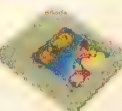
Page 65



The classic alien attacker comes to the Game Boy. Lookin' good and playin' hot!

Side Pocket

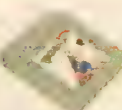
Page 66



Hustle some eight-ball action with this small screen pool simulation.

Bugs Bunny

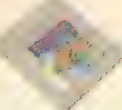
Page 67



'So, what's up, Doc?' Well, this simple collect 'em up just bugs everybody.

Super Mario Land

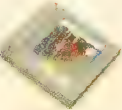
Page 68



Mario and chums steal the show in this superb platform game!

Super R.C. Pro-Am

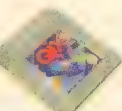
Page 69



Superb radio controlled car racing – for up to four players!

Qix

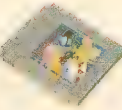
Page 70



Wild, weird and just a little bit wonderful. This aged arcade game is still fab!

Revenge Of The 'Gator

Page 71



Pinball with a reptilian twist. Great two-player head-to-head.

Solar Striker

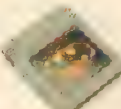
Page 72



A simple shoot 'em up with enough playability to keep you blasting 'till late!

Batman

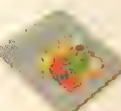
Page 73



The latex loony leaps into action! A Dark Knight meets Super Mario platformer.

Golf

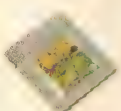
Page 74



Tee fore two? Naff puns aside, this is a cracking golf game with 36 vicious holes.

Tennis

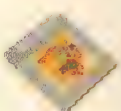
Page 75



Nintendo serve up one of the best tennis simulations on any machine. Ever.

Kwirk

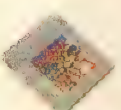
Page 76



Want to exercise your brain? This block-pushing puzzler will make it sweat conkers!

Dr Mario

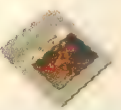
Page 77



Tetris meets tablets in this bug-bashing, pill-plopping puzzle game. Ah tchoo!

Castlevania Adventure

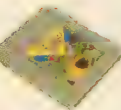
Page 78



Get your teeth into this Drac attack, and whip up a storm!

Nintendo World Cup

Page 79



Play a pal in one of the strangest footy sims you're ever likely to see!

King Of The Zoo

Page 80

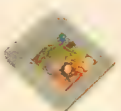
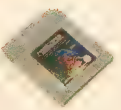


Table-top ball-rolling antics with animals. Weird or what? (Er, weird.)

Chess Master

Page 81



Can't find an opponent? Here's the perfect one: plays well and doesn't get upset.

TOTAL!

GAME BOY REVIEWS

By comparing the previous month's scores, we can find out which game was the best. You can find out more about the games in this issue by looking at the reviews. The scores are in the box at the top of each page. The scores are in the box at the top of each page. The scores are in the box at the top of each page.

For Game Boy (1-4 players)

From Nintendo

Price £30 (with Four Player Adapter)



F-1 RACE

Imagine screeching past the post, Piquet-fashion? Or nudging the opposition off the track, Senna-style? On the other hand you could suffer a Mansell-like misfortune by running out of petrol a few feet from the finish line. Well whatever aspect of Formula One racing you fancy, you can now do it in style on your Game Boy.

There are several options open to would-be boy (and girl) racers. The main one is the Grand Prix which takes you to eight different countries' circuits. There are ten competitors in each race, nine are computer-controlled and the other one is you. If you come first you move onto the next circuit which is that little bit more twisty-turny and has more skillful opponents.

Don't worry if you fail – you can keep racing on the same circuit until you win. What's more there's a battery back-up in the cart so if you get to circuit five one day, you can start on level five the next.

If the thought of a real challenge terrifies you then you can have a go at the Time Trial instead. Here you can choose any of the eight circuits and either race round with loads of other cars on the track or just on your lonesome. When you achieve a speed record you can enter your initials and save it on the cart for all time.

But by far the most interesting feature is the simultaneous four-player option. All you need is four pals (each with a Game Boy and a copy of F-1 Race) and Nintendo's Four Player Adapter. You

CHEQUERED FLAGS

Speed you wouldn't believe! Hit the turbo and grit your teeth. Eight tracks increasing in difficulty. Spanky four-player option



Pathetic! Half way into my first lap and I've crashed. What's weird is that I appear to have crashed into nothing.

can all then race against one another!

I don't know how it has been done but F1 Race is incredibly fast. When you get up to top speed the track flies by at an alarming rate. And beyond that there's a turbo boost for gaining even more speed on the straights! Amazingly, the graphics haven't been simplified to achieve this speed: the track is detailed yet still moves smoothly. There are roadside sign posts that you can crash into and there's a different backdrop to each circuit (get a load of the Taj Mahal on the Indian course).

If you want to experience the thrill of Formula One racing on your Game Boy there's really only one place to look – and F-1 Race is it! **ANDY**



TOTAL!

Looks



■ Pretty bloomin' impressive! The detailed scenery moves swiftly and smoothly

Sounds



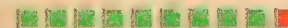
■ Hit the turbo, and the engine squeals! Both sound effects and tunes are fabby

Gameplay



■ Fast, enthralling and very challenging. We can't tear Bag Head away from it!

Life span



■ It'll keep you going for yonks. Especially if you use the splendid four-player option



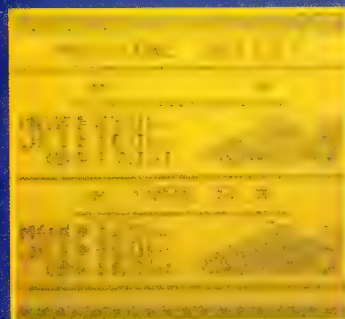
Who'd have thought such speed was possible on the Game Boy? And it's not just an exercise in programming. The gameplay is spot-on, the graphics are brill and the four-player option is the bee's knees!

Final rating
88
Percent

PIT STOPS

It's pretty unforgiving – if you don't get close to first place on the first lap, you probably won't catch up at all. If anything, it's a bit too tough

Game Boy racers



First choose your cars (tricky choice, huh?). I quite fancy the top car but I'm not sure if that shade of gray will go with my designer balaclava.



That's me over there on the left. While I'm testing my tyres on the grass verge, Bag Head and Misery Guts are hurtling past. Any chance of a tow guys?



Steve's in a slightly better position in that he's still actually on the track. But he still has to get past the formidable Bag Head – Demon Driver From Hell.



This is Bag Head's view. As you can see he's wiping the floor with us. (Funny, 'cos he's completely hopeless at every other activity on the planet.)

ROBOCOP

**For Game Boy
(1 player)
From Ocean
Price £25**

As you take on the role of hi-tech patrolman, Alex Murphy, you have four directives (mission-type thingies) to fulfil. Serve the public trust. Protect the innocent. Uphold the law. And try not to violently shove your Game Boy down the toilet when you die in the same place for about the 50th time (fume!).

Okay, so the last one is a bit dodgy, but that's how I felt about the game after a few hour's play. It's not that the game is too difficult, after all I finished two levels on the first day (there are ten in total) and no gamer wants to master their new cart in a week. But it is tricky, and because Robocop is such a slow-moving galvanised gimp, you can't afford to make any mistakes.

You can breeze straight through a level on one day, only to find that you get nowhere the next. So before I continue, let me say that this one is strictly for a) Robocop fans and b) hardened gamers.

As you clump your way along each of the hori-

zontally scrolling levels you get to see some pretty smart graphics. They're small and a bit hard to make out, but once you get used to it a whole host of nicely drawn and well animated characters await your attention.

There are also some neat bonus levels like rescuing a hostage or putting together a photofit picture. Sound too is above average with a funky version of the Robocop theme (You know the one, it goes, de daa de daa daaaa, de daaa de duuumm. No? Oh, well), and plenty of hefty gun-type noises.

Now you're all probably thinking, 'Does Andy D like this or not then?'. Well, the truth is, I'm not entirely sure. It's slick, beautifully programmed and a real challenge. But the mixture of slow, plodding Robocop and high-speed attackers means that dodging enemy fire is horribly difficult. It starts off bothersome, passes through frustrating and then heads for annoying at high speed.

With a meaty £25 price tag, you might be wise



To complete level one Robo has to plug this cowardly baddie hiding behind the hostage. Hit the girl and Murphy loses energy.



Take that! You motorbiking creep! Ah. Once again, Robo's speedy reflexes enable him to beat up large chunks of fresh air.

UPPERS

This is one good-looking game. Terrific soundtracks and gunshots

DOWNERS

Robocop isn't the speediest of chaps, so avoiding attack can be frustrating

to pop into somewhere like Boots and have a quick blast before handing over the cash. **ANDY**

TOTAL!

TOTAL!

Looks



■ The sprites are a bit weeny but they're beautifully drawn and move really well

Sounds



■ A souped-up version of the Robocop theme and some stonky sound effects

Gameplay



■ There are several nice touches but the sluggish controls make it frustrating

Life span



■ If it doesn't annoy you into submission, it'll keep you going for blimmin' ages

Looks professional but the annoying gameplay will get to you. Robo is just too sluggish (unlike his enemies). It's very good but not brilliant

Final rating
74
Percent

Stay out of trouble (!?)



Here I am reacting rapidly to the onslaught of two gunmen. As you can see, it isn't nearly rapid enough. By the time I've got my gun out, they've gone home.



Oh rats! I'm hit again! Er, that sneaky window sniper just caught me off-guard that's all. I'll get him next time. (Thank heavens for the power-up icon!)



Okay, mister sniper person, prepare to get blast- Wargh! Hey, come on that's not fair, he crept up on me from behind! (I've had enough of this.)



At last, the end is in sight. Unfortunately it's the end of me. Two snipers, a regular gunman and a martial arts expert... Oh, Roboplop!

TURTLES

FALL OF THE FOOT CLAN

For Game Boy (1 player)

From Konami

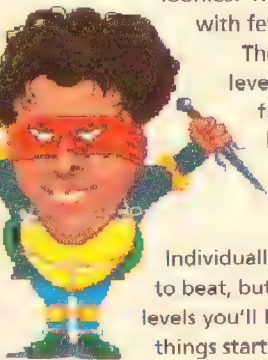
Price £25

One good thing about this Turtles game is that it's totally original. It's not based on the film, the arcade machine or the NES game. This time, April - reporter and close chum of the Turtles - has been kidnapped by Krang and his gang. Take control of the awesome foursome and get her back!

The action is standard beat 'n' shoot 'em fare, as each Turtle walks, jumps and somersaults through five scrolly levels. You guide one Turtle at a time so you effectively have four lives. Each Turtle brandishes his own distinctive weapon and can also throw shurikens (small pointy frisbees) for a longer attack range.

Each level is teeming with gangly-looking mutants which appear from above, below, right and left so you must be

constantly on your guard. For variety, there are dozens of baddies that try to de-shell you, like hovering bugs, bum-biting killer fish and leg-gnawing robo-dogs. Later on you can also get lasered by huge robots, fried in an electrical force field or run over by the massive motorcycling loonies! The hazards come thick and fast with few breaks in the action.



There are several sections to each level - complete them all and you face one of the better known beasts from the comics. Be-Bop, Rock Steady, The Fly, Shredder and Krang all await a pasting at the hands of the green guys.

Individually these characters are fairly easy to beat, but by the time you reach the later levels you'll have lost most of your lives and things start to look grim!

However, the same can't be said for the graphics. The Turtles and their opponents look amazing, both in the way they move and their size. Some of the enemies are so big it's unreal. What's more the sounds are turtlely brilliant! There's a different soundtrack for each level and when you reach the sewer sections every thing echoes beautifully.

There's an option screen at the start of the game which enables you to start on any level and the first thing this stupid reviewer did was go straight for level five. Surprisingly, I finished it in no time at all. But don't worry

finishing one level with all four lives is a doddle. But actually getting through all five levels in one go definitely ain't.

I have to say this is well worth shelling out for. Even those who claim to detest the Turtles should turn a blind eye to the characters and enjoy this fast paced and ultra-slick beat 'em up. **ANDY**

TOTAL!

TOTAL!

Looks



■ Huge, well-animated sprites and imaginative scenery make this a visual treat!

Sounds



■ Excellent Turtles soundtrack and very meaty sound effects add atmosphere

Gameplay

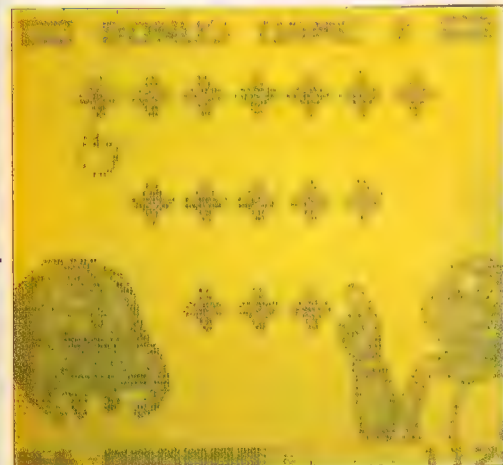


■ A bit repetitive, but basically a cracking beat 'em up (right, I'm off for another go)

Life span



■ Selectable levels make it a doddle. But play it properly and the challenge is big



Win the hidden bonus games and you can replenish your energy. In this one, you and Krang take it in turns to remove shurikens. Whoever picks up the last one loses.

UPPERS

Great graphics, great sound, great gameplay, greasy greasy great!

DOWNERS

A little repetitive in parts, and the level select option is a bit silly



I'm not a massive Turtles fan but this is great. The graphics are excellent, the sound is well-funky and what's more it's playable beyond belief.

Final rating
91
Percent

Four fiendish fellows



Getting trapped between trucks is a definite no-no. If there are mutants around they'll prevent you escaping while also inflicting hits upon you.



A hard-shelled hero you might be, but even that won't save you from a high speed Harley. This motor bike is deadly so jump it every time.



Frrrrzzzz! So let me get this right. If I move left I get frizzed by the force field. And if I go right I get frizzed by the robot. Oh fine, blinkin' lovely that is.



Not only does the water restrict your movements a bit, it also contains a few more nasties. Mutant + Piranha + large ball = recipe for disaster!

R-TYPE

For Game Boy (1 player)
From Nintendo/Trem
Price £20

Empire (squidgy alien baddies) way, way (way) out in space. But instead of greeting us with open tentacles, these putrid creatures see us as a great opportunity for some target practice.

Obviously, there's no point talking to these things. No, our best option is to go and kill them all now and have done with it. But, of course, what with military cut-backs and the bank holidays

Not only have the evil Bydo empire invaded amusement arcades and games consoles the world over, now they're

sneaking into your hand-held as well! Yes indeed, possibly the most famous shoot 'em up of all time (apart from tatty old Space Invaders) is now playing on a Game Boy near you.

If you haven't had the pleasure of this alien stomping spectacular, it goes like this: we (mankind, that is) have stumbled upon the Bydo

POWER PODS
 Brilliantly gruesome graphics!
 Frantic tactical blast 'em up action

SLIMEY STUFF
 'Easy' mode is a bit too easy.
 You soon learn how to finish levels

coming up, our massive death-dealing fleet consists of... One R-9 ship and you. Well, you don't want to make a scene or anything so, you buckle up and scream off into the wide black yonder (unfortunately, that's you screaming, not the ship). Still, at least the R-9 has a decent weapons system with power-up abilities. The ever-so-thoughtful space fleet has sent unmanned POW shuttles deep into Bydo territory. Shoot these and a POW unit is released which can be picked up to boost your firepower.

You can get all sorts of goodies like reflective lasers and the sideways-firing bubble unit. But the most useful add-on is the Power Pod. This can be attached to the front or rear of your R-9 and acts as an impenetrable shield, stopping all but the most powerful of missiles.

The only way to defeat the Bydo is to fly through all six areas which slide across the screen from right to left. At the heart of each area lies a huge guardian creature - destroy this and you can move onto the next area.

I'll admit that R-Type has aged a bit since it came out (ooh, years ago), but it's still a mighty exciting shoot 'em up. This Game Boy version is little short of miraculous, with only a few bits missing from the original (like the R-9's homing

TOTAL!

Looks 

■ Superb! There's almost no way the graphics could be improved upon

Sounds 

■ Great arcade soundtracks, but the blasting noises could be a bit meatier

Gameplay 

■ Exciting mixture of tactical flying and mindless fire-button hammering!

Life span 

■ If you play on the 'Hard' setting you're in for a lasting blasting challenge!

R-Type fans won't find anything new in this version. But if you've been starved of blasting action it's a big enough meal for anybody!

Final rating
86
 Percent



missiles and a few tunes). The sound is great, with versions of the weirdy arcade music and effects, and the graphics really can't be faulted.

You can 'learn' the levels quite quickly and I don't think it'll take anyone long to finish the game, but it's a lot of fun getting there. **STEVE**

TOTAL!



Okay, so it's in mono and there's no parallax scrolling, but aren't those graphics just a teensy bit identical to the coin-op?

Bydo bosses



This nasty creature is Gladiator - a weird dude and no mistake. Fire the Power Pod into his belly and he's dead (alien) meat.



This horribly organic monster is Gomba. You need to place your Power Pod on top between the two uppermost tubey things.



The huge Battleship Crusader makes up the entire third level. You have to fly along its hull destroying the gun emplacements.

You are in a plain room. In one corner is a pile of bones and there are exits to the west and north. The pile of bones looks familiar and just as you remember the monster generators in Gauntlet 2, they generate some monsters right in front of you. If only you'd brought a weapon from the armoury. You need to move fast if you're going to get away from the ghosts that are filling the room. You decide to run away. If you flee west, turn to page 57. If you flee east, turn to page 43. If you head back south, turn to page 29.

Gimme a break!



After the break things aren't looking too bad. The balls are spread out and there's one just asking to be sunk in the middle bag. Right hand spin, methinks.



Several shots later, and I've got just four balls to go. That star in the top right pocket signals that any ball sunk there will add two balls to the shot-o-meter.



And sure enough, I complete the game with plenty of shots left. Having finished the frame and earned a hefty bonus, a grille appears to congratulate me!



The proof. At the end of each game the table of champions is displayed. I've reached City class and become a real human being (you start off as a frog!).

SIDE POCKET

For Game Boy (1-2 players)
From Data East

Price £25

There's nothing the TOTAL! team like better than to nip out for a game of pool during their lunch hour (well, with the exception of large sums of money, vast amounts of food, parties, fast cars and Nintendo). So I was excited about getting a version for the Game Boy.

But woe is me, this is nothing like the good ol' British game of pool we all know and love. These must be the American rules 'cos they're rubbish. For a start you can't play against the computer so if you want a one-to-one challenge you'll have to find a friend with another Game Boy (fairly easy) and a copy of Side Pocket (not so easy).

Also the games you can play are odd to say the least. In Pocket play you have to work your way up through the four pool-playing ranks of Club Class, City Class, State Class and World Class by

achieving a target score. The target is 3,000 points on Club Class whereas the almost impossible dream of 7,000 points puts you at the top of the World Class.

To do this you need to sink nine balls (ha! They must be kidding). But you only have a certain amount of attempts to do it in. At the top of the screen is a shot-o-meter made up of little balls. Each shot you play removes half a ball. If you pot something, half a ball is added, so good shots effectively cost nothing. If, on the other hand, you play a foul shot half a ball is deducted. When all the balls have gone, it's the end of the game.

Nine Ball is equally odd and is really just a practice mode for the two-player option. This time there's no shot-o-meter and no penalties for fouls... Hmm, pretty boring really.

Here the aim is to sink the number nine ball as quickly as possible. Trouble is you always have to hit the lowest numbered ball first. The easiest way to win this game is to pot all of the balls in order finishing up with the nine ball. Real skill comes into it when you try to sink the nine ball early by hitting it with either the lowest numbered ball or the cue ball on the rebound (!).

Side Pocket is good, but it could have been better. The lack of a computer opponent seriously spoils the fun but worse still is the inclusion of only two game types (both being American rules). Another problem is the screen



It's bloomin' hard - getting past city class is a real challenge.
Two player option is the most fun



You can't play against the computer.
Lining up shots on a screen this size is annoyingly tricky

size. When you have to make fine adjustments to the shot angle, a small screen really doesn't help.

This is great to play when you have five minutes to kill, so if you lead a hectic life this might be just the thing. Otherwise leave it alone. **ANDY**

TOTAL!

TOTAL!

Looks



■ Pretty weedy, but the realistic ball movement lifts it above the average mark

Sounds



■ Funky tunes during play, but the sound effects are feeble and a bit inappropriate

Gameplay



■ Small screen makes aiming difficult. Odd game styles and no computer opponent

Life span



■ All right for a quick game, but this is no substitute for the real thing

More of a puzzle game with pool balls than a true pool simulation. With a computer opponent and English rules it could have been great.

Final rating
59
Percent



If you get a very high score you can skip a class by pulling off a trick shot. To complete this first one, push up on the pad four times and hit the cue ball at full strength.

The BUGS BUNNY Crazy Castle

For Game Boy (1 player)

From Kemco

Price £20



Bugs Bunny's Buck-toothed Honey Bunny is being held captive in a castle, and you must guide Bugs through 80-odd levels in order to rescue her. To complete a level Bugs has to weave his way through the platforms, stairways and doorways and collect all the carrots. When there's no more rabbit fodder, Bugs leaps up and down and moves onto the next level.

As the levels grow larger there are pipes as



The animation is gorgeous. Neat password system means you can skip completed levels



Most of the levels look very similar. The challenge gets harder, but the puzzles are samey and dull

well as stairways to transport Bugs around the castle. However, timing Bugs' entry into the pipe is important as you may find him emerging at the other end right into an oncoming enemy. In this case we're talking about such unsavoury characters as Yosemite Sam, Sylvester the cat, Daffy Duck and Wile E. Coyote!

These guys wander around the screen and if Bugs doesn't get out of their way in time he loses a life. Of course, there are ways of avoiding this – like running away, for instance. Because the bad guys home in on Bugs, he can peg it down a staircase and double back underneath the platform. The baddies then get confused and just wander back and forth aimlessly.

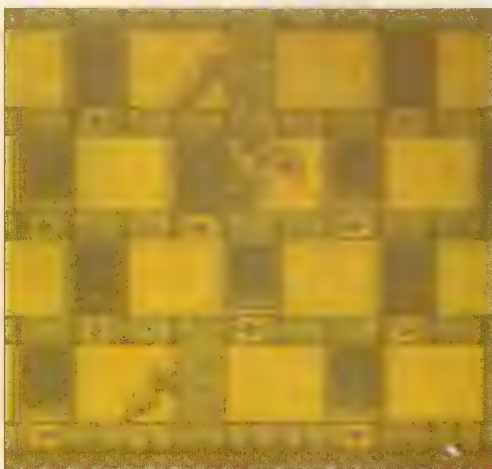
Alternatively you can scour the level for a boxing glove. If Bugs picks up one of these he can rabbit-punch any baddie who's too close for comfort and it's bye-bye bad guy.

The third and final way of avoiding death is to find one of four heavy items in the game – the crate, ten ton weight, safe or bucket. If Bugs pushes one of these into Yosemite Sam, Sylvester the cat, Daffy Duck or Wile E. Coyote. Well, that's all folks!

The problem with The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle is that it gets horribly repetitive. I've already described everything there is in the game and each level just has different arrangements of the same hazards. This would be all right if there were only



Yosemite Sam might have a massive hat, but he doesn't even have a small hope against Bugs and a ten ton weight!



Oh my, I'm spoilt for choice. Shall I go up, down, left or right? I know, I'll walk straight into an enemy and die horribly.

TOTAL!

Looks

■ The characters are beautifully animated, but the levels are all very similar (snore!)

Sounds

■ A few pleasant sound effects, but the tunes are naff and a bit disjointed

Gameplay

■ Okay for the first few level, but blimey, it gets really tedious. It's all the same!

Life span

■ Lots of levels. Handy password system. But a few day's play will bore you

What a waste of an opportunity. If any cartoon character was going make a good game it was Bugs. But despite good animation, this is dull beyond belief.

Final rating
43
Percent

the 60 levels described in the instruction booklet. But there are in fact over 80 levels – And let's face it, I was bored senseless after only 20 of 'em. True the animation is quite gorgeous, and true the sound is more than up to scratch, but there are too many levels, and they're far too dull.

ANDY **TOTAL!**



A vertically scrolling level. Will this test Bugs intelligence in a whole new way? Nope, it's as bland as the rest of the levels.

At last, you manage to find Bugs Bunny. 'Nyah, what's up Doc?' he asks. 'You tell him of your quest and he looks thoughtful for a moment. "Yeah, I heard about that. Here, have this carrot. It's one of the objects you're looking for. And take my advice kid, that Rockford guy is up to no good. If he gave you something, you'd best ignore it. See ya around k-k-d'. At this point the rabbit runs off into the depths of the castle. You can hear him laughing as you step through the glowing door that has just appeared. Turn to page 64 to continue.

Yuk! What are ya tryin' ta do kid, poison me? I'm a vegetarian! Tom looks well-peev'd and leaps into the cockpit of his plane with a disgusted look upon his face. The plane soon takes off and starts performing a series of spectacular mid-air stunts. Just as you begin to think the pleasant pilot is treating you to a free air display, he flies low over the deck and guns you down. You have made a grave error of judgement and you are later buried at sea (well, used as bait). You must now start the adventure all over again by nipping back to page 4.

SUPER MARIO LAND

For Game Boy (1 player)
From Nintendo
Price £20

Take the most successful game of all time, tone down the colours a bit, add a few new meanies and what've you got? One of the best Game Boy titles so far, that's what.

Mario's mini-adventure takes place across the four kingdoms of Sarasaland. This time, everyone's favourite plumber is up against a new villain: a nasty piece of work by the name of Tatanga – mysterious spaceman, loony emperor of Sarasaland and kidnapper of Princess Daisy.

The gameplay is pretty much as you'd expect from Mario, with block head-butting, turtle-stomping and an awful lot of platform-jumping. True to form there are lots of secret passages, hidden blocks and special bits.

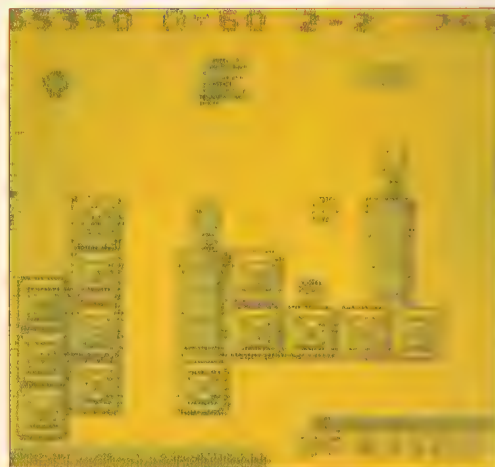
However, there are also a few new twists in that Mario gets to pilot a submarine in kingdom two, and then an aeroplane in kingdom four. Both levels are sideways scrolling shoot 'em ups, where Mario has to blast his way through Tatanga's cronies to reach and defeat the level boss.

There are three stages to each kingdom, so Mario has to battle through 12 long levels before he can face Tatanga and rescue Princess Daisy.

At the end of each stage Mario can win extra lives or a power-up in a game of chance. There are four platforms bearing a 1-up, 2-up, 3-up or Fire Flower power-up. Mario moves from platform to platform, and you stop him by hitting button A.

Mario collects whatever item is on the platform he lands on, but to make things difficult there's also a ladder moving at the same time! You can stop Mario on the 3-up platform only to find him climbing down to the power-up!

The only disadvantage to this little bonus section is that you soon get the hang of stocking



Crivens! Super Mario doesn't know which way to jump! Fire-spitting Yurarin Boo on the left, a deadly Chibibo to the left and a bum-biting Pakkun flower beneath!

up on Marios. I managed to finish the game after a few weeks – mainly because I had so many Marios (18 at one point!). There's even a continue option as well, so it's not the toughest of missions.

I'm always impressed by the quality of Game Boy graphics, and Super Mario Land's are no exception. There are loads of different enemies – all nicely animated – and the scenery on the last kingdom is gorgeous! True, the graphics blur a little as Mario runs along, but after a while you hardly notice it. There are no complaints on the sound front, either, with excellent echoey soundtracks in glorious stereo!

There's little else to say about Super Mario



FLOWERS

Super Mario gameplay is as captivating as ever.

Lots of hidden goodies to discover!
Sight 'n' sound is typically high quality



FIREBALLS

Continues and extra Marios mean you could finish it quite quickly.
Er... That's it!

TOTAL!

Looks ■■■■■■■■■■

■ There's some lovely scenery later on and all the baddies are really nicely drawn

Sounds ■■■■■■■■■■

■ Up to the usual Super Mario standard with boppy tunes and slammin' sounds

Gameplay ■■■■■■■■■■

■ Simply wonderful! Lots of jumping, lots of shooting, lots of collecting. Lots!

Life span ■■■■■■■■■■

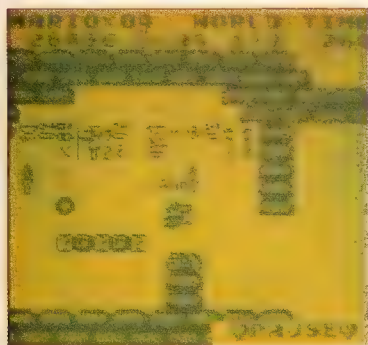
■ Even when you've finished it, there's still enough action to warrant a repeat



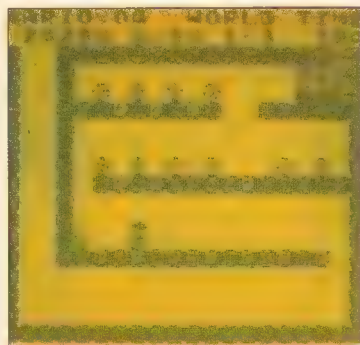
Yet another wonderful Mario game (where will it end?). You must own a Game Boy, so why haven't you got Super Mario Land?

Final rating
94
Percent

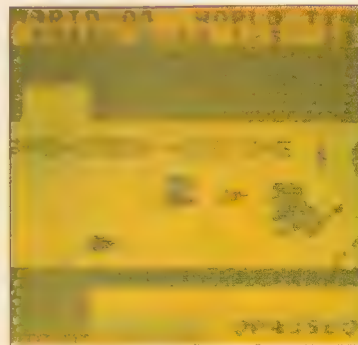
Land, other than if you're a Mario fan this should already be in your Game Boy collection. **STEVE**



Here's a swift guided tour of Birabuto Kingdom (the decidedly Egyptian world 1-3). Mario has just blatted a Gao sphinx for 800 points – but there are plenty more where that came from!



Keep checking pipes, because they often lead to wondrous bonus rooms like this one. There are plenty of coins to be had plus the occasional power-up (head-butt every block!).



At last! Mario comes face to face with King Totomesu, the flame-gobbling lion of Birabuto Kingdom. With Super Mario on the case, this overgrown tabby doesn't stand a chance!



See! Totomesu is history, and Mario has entered the bonus game. With a little bit of good timing you can collect a 3-up every time and build up an army of Super Marios!

SUPER RC PRO-AM

For Game Boy (1-4 players)

From Nintendo/Rare

Price £25



What better motor sport to simulate on the weeny Game Boy than racing with equally weeny radio controlled cars? If you've seen R.C. Pro-Am on the NES you'll have a pretty good idea of what to expect. The game is pretty much identical in all respects.

You start the championship with the R.C. Racer – a standard car with no extra goodies. However, you can customise the car by picking up better tyres, a larger motor and a more powerful battery. The tyres improve your handling, the motor increases your top speed and the battery helps acceleration. There are five different equipment upgrades, so when you have all five, that's as good as it's gonna get.

However, even with all these improvements, the R.C. Racer is still a bit of a slippery snail (it's slow and corners like a oil tanker). What you need is the Speed Demon – a nippy little motor with better handling. Or even better, the Spiker – a regular radio controlled racing car from hell!

But buying new cars is an expensive business – especially when the only cash you have are the letters N, I, N, T, E, N, D and O. These bonus letters appear on the track and you have to drive over them to pick them up. Once you've spelt the word 'Nintendo', those nice members of the R.C. Club



The tracks are absolutely huge. Multi-player option is great! Using weapons adds a neat twist



Without a game save, the early courses get horribly familiar



Oil spills are absolutely horrible! They make you spin and crash, and for some reason my car always seems attracted to them.

hand over a brand spanking new motor car.

Not content with designing some pretty hairy tracks to squeal round, Rare (yes, it's them again) have also littered the tarmac with hazards and bonuses. Hazards are bad: sand and water slow you down; traffic cones stop you dead; and oil slicks spin you off the track, making your car explode.

Bonuses are good: zippers whizz your car along; the 1-up gives you an extra continue; and roll cages prevent your car from falling to bits after a spin!

This is a brilliant little racer and the four-player option only makes it more desirable. Time to rush out and make some airwaves! **STEVE**



TOTAL!

Looks



■ Everything moves amazingly smoothly, and the car animation is unbelievable!

Sounds



■ Racing noises are good enough, and there are some nice in between jingles

Gameplay



■ The cars are extremely manoeuvrable and the race action is thrilling to the end

Life span



■ Solo racers will soon grow tired of playing through the early courses

Once again, Rare manage the impossible with this stunning R.C. racer! The thrill won't last forever, but the multi-player option is a winner!

Final rating
87
Percent

Baby drivers



So here's my little R.C. Racer, screeching under 'Game Boy' bridge in a neck-and-neck tussle with some other, lesser radio controlled car. I can collect those stars up ahead to top up my mine-dropping capabilities. He!



Great! Those chevrons on the road are zippers (no jokes, please). Drive over these and your R.C. car gets a sudden kick up the 6V motor. And I'm in the lead! See there! A number 1 above my car! It's me! Me! Me!



Oh well, I was ever so close to coming first (if I hadn't written of three cars coming round that last bend). Still, I've made it to the next race, and I've (somehow) managed to pick up some upgrade icons!



All tooled up and ready to roll, I'm on to the next race. missiles! Now this is more like it! As you can see, I have, in a horribly unsportsmanlike way, managed to move into third place by blowing up my opposition. Ha!

QIX

If you can remember this one in the arcades, you're older than you look! Taito's weird shoot 'em up... Well, it's not really a shooter. Erm, this jolly platform rom—Nope. No platforms either! Heck... This puzzle game does—Argh! It's not a puzzler either!

Look, it's like this. You control a little widget which moves around the screen, leaving a slug-like trail behind it. If you can manage to join the line up to an edge to form a totally connected loop, the enclosed area gets filled in. To complete a screen, all you have to do is enclose 75% or more. Anything over 75% earns a bonus.

Easier said than done! A bizarre creature called a Qix buzzes around the screen in horribly random directions. If you run into a Qix while drawing a line, or the Qix bumps into your line before it's finished, your little craft gets blown up. When you split a screen into two bits, the area which gets



After completing every fourth screen, you're treated to a not-very-colourful-but-quite-impressive-anyway firework display!



One way of getting a good bonus is to slowly entrap the Qix by 'building' around him. Use button A to draw quickly.

For Game Boy (1-2 players)



I'm mere moments away from getting 'Split Qix'. Mega big bonus, here I come!

filled in is the one *without* a mad Qix whizzing about inside it.

Clearing the first few screens is easy, but then things start getting nasty. Sparks constantly move around the lines you draw, and if these touch your ship-thingy, it's destroyed. The longer you take to finish the screen, the more sparks appear and the faster they become.

And it gets worse! With two Qix on screen you have a choice. You can either get your 75% and move on, or you can split them. If both areas contain a Qix you get 'Split Qix' (painful). There's no bonus for that screen, but the next bonus you get will be doubled (as long as you don't get slaughtered, of course).

In fact, Qix is full of nasty decisions: do you go for the minimum 75%, which is safer, but carries no bonus? Or do you go for a high score and risk



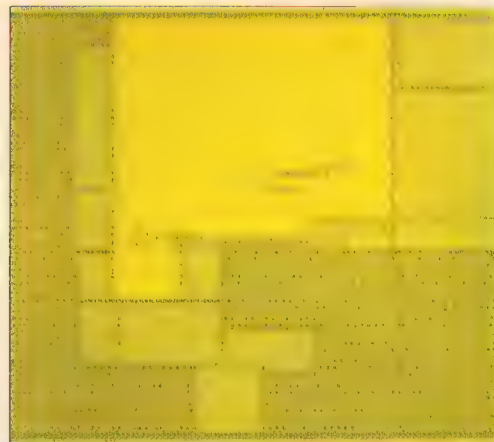
Nice and simple – instant pick up 'n' play appeal. Slick visuals, spooky sounds!



Very, very tough indeed! No real variety between levels – it just gets (much) harder

From Nintendo

Price £20



This patchwork quilt is actually me about to complete a screen. 5% more and I'm done.

losing a life? Should you just nibble away at the screen, or be bold and try to dart across before the Qix gets you? (Durr!)

The one problem with Qix (the game, not the whizzy thing) is that it gets very hard, very quickly. I can never get past screen nine or ten, but it's entertaining nonetheless. This is definitely one of the quick-load-up-and-play games, and is well-suited to the Game Boy. The two-player head-to-head option isn't worth bothering with, but for solo gamers, Qix is infuriating, annoying, frustrating and pretty darn playable! **STEVE**

TOTAL!

TOTAL!

Looks



Nothing special, but they do the job nicely. Neat firework display, though!

Sounds



Not much in the way of tunes or effects, but the Qix noise is extremely weird!

Gameplay



All-important controls are responsive, and the challenge will get you hooked

Life span



Hard to play for hours on end, but you'll pick it up every now and then

If you fancy something different, this will definitely fit the bill! It's very unusual and extremely playable, but perhaps lacking variety.

Final rating
83
Percent



For Game Boy
(1-2 players)

From HAL Laboratory Inc.

Price £20

REVENGE OF THE GATOR

Imagine, if you will, a pinball table. Now imagine another one... And two more. Got that? Right. Now join them all together, shrink them down until they fit in your pocket and you should have something like *Revenge Of The 'Gator*.

The main 'table' is four screens high with a set of flippers in each screen. They're all joined together so it isn't until the ball reaches the very bottom screen that you lose a life. These screens are filled with strange little Alligator-related devices like gates, blocks, bumpers and switches. They all do different things when the ball hits them. For example, in one screen there are three

switches. Hit them all and a door opens to the very top screen. And then there are the chomping 'gators. Get the ball into one of their mouths and it could end up in one of the three bonus levels, back at the start or it might come flying out into a different screen altogether.

If there's one criticism I can make it's that there's no real aim to the game other than scoring as much as possible. It would have been nice if there was some sort of end game, er... Thing.

Even so it's still a great game. The graphics are very fancy and it sounds wonderful. But most importantly the ball movement is ultra-realistic. When you first play it, you find yourself tilting the Game Boy to try and guide the ball around!

All this alone would have made 'Gator a worthy addition to your set of games but there's also a very odd and hugely playable two-player game for you to mess about with. 'Gator is so realistic that people who hate real tables won't like this either. Otherwise, it's an absolute must! **ANDY**

FLIPPERS

Huge table plus three bonus games.
Superb sound and detailed graphics

GATORS

It just goes on and on and on...
Too random and relies on luck

The link-up game. Get the other player's score down by sinking the ball in their side, or hitting various bits of scenery.



- 1 When the baby 'gator (at the top) escapes, hit it with the ball for loads of points.
- 2 Get rid of all the blocks and prongs on the right to open the door.
- 3 Hit the left buttons to open the door.
- 4 The 'gators' mouths warp the ball.

TOTAL!

Looks



Very imaginative. Lots of little animated 'gators' n' stuff make it that bit different

Sounds



Jolly good again. A jazzy soundtrack and lots of weird little sound effects

Gameplay



If you like pinball you'll love this. Might even make fans out of some pinball-haters

Life span

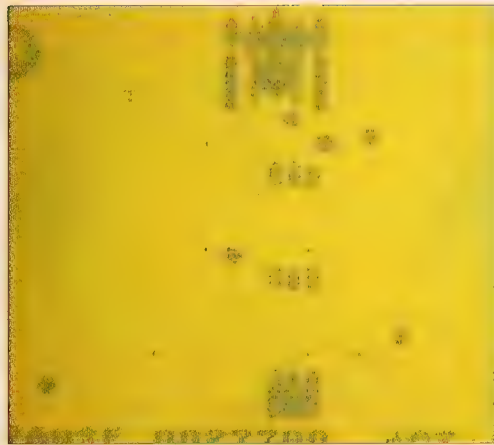


It's not the sort of game you have to finish, so you could be playing it forever

This is as close to real pinball as you can get, and has more features than your average table! It's fine, fun and flipperin' brill!

Final rating
85
Percent

You pull the right hand lever and wait. After a few moments a large lift descends from the ceiling. When it stops, a hooded man and several dwarves step out. You think about striking up a conversation but they look so angry you think better of it. This may have been unwise because moments later, the dwarves grab you and tie you to a nearby chair. The hooded man walks over to the fire, takes out three red-hot irons and approaches you. What follows is far too grisly to even put in writing. Needless to say, you must now turn to page 4.



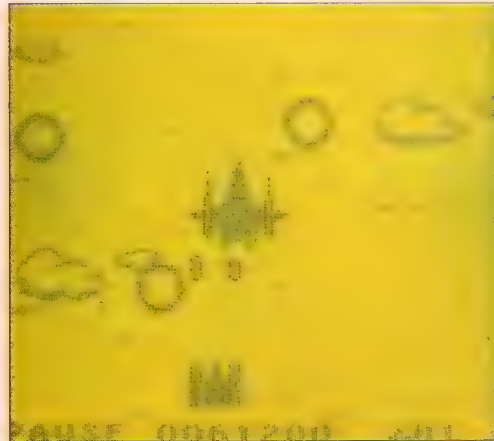
Guardian number one. He only moves from side to side, so he's a doddle to destroy. Ha!



The dreaded tweezers of death. These devils give you a nasty pinch (there's skin in that!).



Really low level flying! Even the Sunday drivers are out to get you. Blam those biddies!



Guardian number two. This one fires giant balls and dodges about lots... Try panicking!

SOLAR STRIKER

For Game Boy (1 player) From Nintendo Price £20

What a depressing thought. If computer games are anything to go by, no sooner will we conquer space than we'll be waging war on a whole host of alien beings as well as fighting amongst ourselves. Yet again in Solar Striker the theme is wanton destruction on a massive scale... Don't you just love it!

Yes indeed, cast aside those environment friendly thoughts and come with me on a speedy spree of strafing and light-hearted laser play.

The levels scroll from top to bottom and there's no annoying scenery to crash into. Well, there is scenery but it's only there to look good and give the impression of movement. Things that *do* harm your fragile craft are the attacking aliens. If you come into direct contact with them you're doomed – and this is also true if their bullets hit you.

What's more, it's not the amount of aliens on screen that messes up your bodywork but their wild movement patterns. At the start of your mission the bad guys simply weave slowly down the screen lobbing the occasional missile. But

STRIKERS

Loads levels, loads baddies!
The difficulty level is set just right,
so you can get a bit further each
time you play

STRIKE-OUTS

It might play well but it still looks
like a sequel to Space Invaders.
Some of the levels are long
and drag on a bit

before long they start sweeping quickly from left to right or swirl rapidly around while letting off volleys of laser fire. Yoiks! Squoiks! Zoiks! (*Thicky berk – SJ.*)

As usual, there's a massive guardian at the end of each and every level. Basically, a rather hefty piece of hardware heaves itself onto the screen, then darts around with all guns blazing. If you can dodge the gunfire and get a decent amount of hits in, it'll explode. But as you get further into the game the guardians get bigger and more powerful. If you haven't collected any power ups, or you lose them before you reach this bit, well... It's a cheap day return to ploppy creek for you.

Solar Striker certainly ain't one of your state-of-the-art shoot 'em ups like R-Type, for instance. Heck, the graphics make a skeleton look meaty! But what it does have in its favour is playability – and lots of it! The alien attack formations and difficulty setting are just about right, so that if you fail at a certain point during one game, you'll get that little bit further the next.



Oh yes, and the lorry drivers on this planet are just as abusive as those here on earth!

Solar Striker may not possess bells and whistles. Nor might it be adorned with knobs. But blow me if this game isn't a real hoot to play. **ANDY**

TOTAL!

TOTAL!

Looks ■■■■■■■■■■
■ Primitive to say the least. Still, there's a good variety of opponents to blast

Sounds ■■■■■■■■■■
■ Good echoey theme tune and the sound effects are more than acceptable

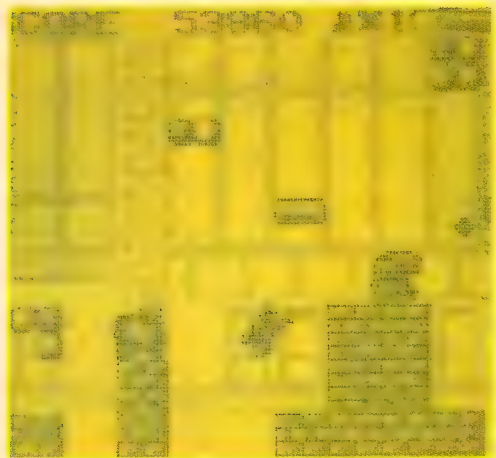
Gameplay ■■■■■■■■■■
■ It takes a while to get into, but when you do it can get pretty exciting!

Life span ■■■■■■■■■■
■ There's quite a bit of challenge here. I've been playing it on and off for months

It looks a bit old fashioned but the high level of playability makes up for it. And there are enough difficult levels to keep you going for ages!

Final rating
72
Percent

BATMAN



Here's the Caped Crusader helping to make the streets of Gotham City a safe place for ordinary people to walk in. Mind you, who's going to go outside while this latex loony is running about with his Batarang?

Question: How do you conjure up the mood and atmosphere of the mysterious dealings of a Dark Knight Detective on a black and white Game Boy?

Answer: You don't.

Which is why the programmers of Batman took the sensible option of making this a straightforward platform jump 'n' shoot 'em up.

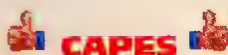
In this game of the film, ol' rubber pants may be a weeny little fellow but he can't can't half leap about! As the game progresses he can also stash a mind-boggling array of weaponry in those squeaky strides of his. All he needs to do is shoot one of the many little black boxes that litter the

levels and a bonus item appears. These tokens usually improve his firepower but he can also pick up extra energy and lives.

This is useful really because there are lots of loooooong levels, each of which is terrifyingly difficult. Fortunately the game is designed so well that when you do make a mistake you know exactly what it is and can avoid it next time around.

Running amok through most of the levels are dozens of Jack Napier's henchmen (Jack is the Joker, or 'putty face' to his mates). They're all out to get you – some just wander back and forth but others fire nasty gun-things which should really be avoided if at all possible.

There are several sections to each level and when you've finished them all there's an end-of-



Stunning graphics: superb scenery, neat sprites and whizzy effects. Very controllable Bat-character



The levels are long and arduous. Restart points are at the very beginning of each stage

level boss to be sorted out (surprise, surprise). The first of these sections appears in the Axis Chemicals plant where Jack Napier has rather foolishly decided to fight you over a large vat of dangerous substances. It's foolish because when you beat him he topples into the chemicals, only to reappear as the horribly disfigured Joker. (If only he'd chosen to fight in the park he'd still be dashingy handsome and earning an honest living by modelling shell-suits or something... Ah, well.)

Like Robocop the graphics are rather small, but they're pretty stylish with some good effects (like the way the screen flips before you start a level). It's all terribly moody and this is helped enormously by some stunning little tunes.

Because Batman is so manoeuvrable, this title is

TOTAL!

Looks



■ Amazing effects, beautiful backdrops and the neatest tiniest sprites ever

Sounds



■ Outstanding tunes make you wish the game could go on for longer!

Gameplay



■ Smooth control and all-action gameplay, but it's slightly flawed by high difficulty

Life span



■ If you can stick with it, there's an awful lot of Gotham City to be explored

A few niggling faults in the gameplay, but Batman is still a good jaunt. Certainly no complaints in the audio-video department!



Final rating
80
Percent

much more fun to play. It may not be as varied or interesting as Super Mario Land, for instance, but it has a similar level of controllability.

If you want to lay your hands on a simple platform shoot 'em up, this is great. Just don't expect to do any detective work – this is purely a test of physical reflexes, not mental ones.

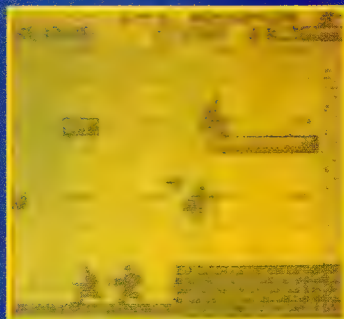
ANDY

TOTAL!

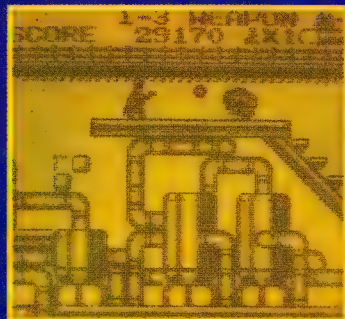
Do the Batman!



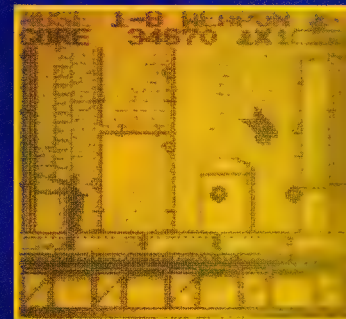
Deep in his cave, Batman calls Commissioner Gordon on the Bat-o-Vision. Batty wants to know if the Commissioner still has his Simpsons video...



Batman sets off for the Commissioner's house with Billy, his favourite pet bat, in tow. It won't be long before Bart and family are back safely.



Hmm... That'll teach me to take directions from a bat wearing glasses. I don't remember the Commissioner having this much pipework in his bathroom...



Jack Napier (alias the Joker)! What are you doing in Commissioner Gordon's bathroom! Get out now! And wipe that stupid grin off your face.

GOLF

No, I refuse to make any awful jokes about tees, fores, plus-fours or mashie nibblicks. Sorry, but this game deserves better than that (and they're not funny anyway).

Nintendo's Golf is sort of, well, golf. And that's it, really. If you like golf in any way, you'll probably enjoy this, because it's really jolly good.

There are two large courses to play on, Japan and USA, giving you 36 different holes to thrash

For Game Boy (1-2 players)

around on. Each course is seen from above (like in a balloon or something) and the screen zooms in when you reach the green (the bit near the hole).

Your golfer is a cute little chap with a flat cap and checked trousers, who stomps out onto the course and hits all the balls for you. However, he won't do anything until you set the direction with a cursor, and then operate the swing-o-meter. This is pretty standard on all golf games: you press fire to start the swing, press again to set the strength, and then press a third time to hit the ball. Stop it on the target and you hit the ball dead centre; if not, the ball curves left or right. In golfing circles, the technical term for this is, 'making a naff shot'.

Anyone expecting a pleasant round of golf is going to be sadly mistaken. The rotten designers

From **Nintendo** Price **£20**



BIRDIES

The save game option is really neat.
36 different holes to play on.
Superb displays of each hole



BUNKERS

Too tough for beginners.
You need to refer to the manual for different club distances

have littered every hole with bunkers, rivers, lakes, trees and all the sorts of things that golfers love to hate. Then, 15 shots later, when you've finally battled through to the green, it's all slopey and horrid. So it takes another half-a-dozen taps to get the ball in the flippin' hole!

Good thing it's got a battery back-up. That way, when things are going badly, you can stop playing at any time and save your position. Then, when you've calmed down, you can restart the game whenever you like!

Golf is a tough, but very long-lasting challenge. It looks fine, sounds good – in fact my only moan is that the head-to-head isn't more interesting (you see the other player's ball on your screen. Wow). At least now you have a pretty good excuse to give to your Dad when you want a new game – because your old man will love this too! **STEVE**

TOTAL!



1 Heck! Trust me to pick a hole with more water than flippin' grass!



2 Right, off I go. Set the strength, whack the ball and watch it soar!



3 Hal! It went exactly 200 metres (and just missed the water. Phew!).



4 My next shot went a bit wayward, but I've still avoided the bunker.



5 All I have to do now is chip it over the sand pit (I'll go in there later).



6 And putt it down. Brilliant! Eh? There are 17 more to do! Oh Poop.

TOTAL!

Looks



■ Lovely graphics show each hole in great detail – especially good when it zooms in

Sounds



■ Tunes are very jolly, but the ball-flight 'whoeeeee' sound is well over the top

Gameplay



■ The courses are tough and the controls testing. It'll take a while to master this!

Life span



■ 36 holes, a battery back-up and the constant challenge of getting a low score!

A stupendous version of the sport, with everything you could possibly want. Golf fans should buy it now!



Final rating
92
Percent

TENNIS

For Game Boy (1-2 players)
From Nintendo
Price £20

The beauty of tennis simulations is that you know the umpire's decision will always be right. That way you don't have some wibbling berk like McEnroe shouting, 'That ball was IIIIN!'. No, instead you get some wibbling berk like Steve J shouting 'AAARGH! This game's not working properly! That ball was definitely in!'.

There are squillions of tennis sims for various machines out there and one or two have been real gems, but I can honestly say with my hand on my heart (*Or the space where it's supposed to be - SJ*) that this is one of the best. True, there are no doubles matches to be played or different surfaces to play on but what it lacks in set-up options it more than makes up for in gameplay.

When you first take a swing at it, the odds seem stacked against you. The computer opponent seems to be able to aim the ball wherever he likes while you just swipe and hope for the best.



UPPERS

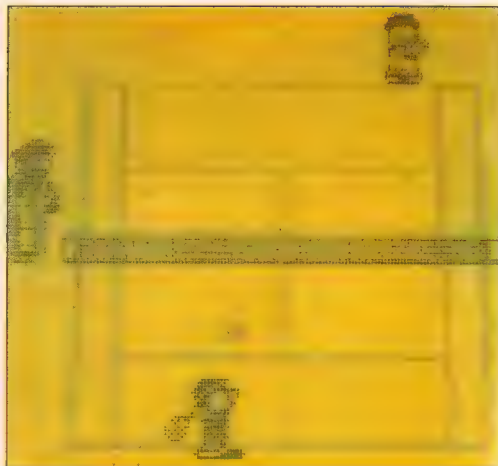
Wonderfully simple, yet brilliantly effective control mechanism.

Four well-graded difficulty settings



DOWNERS

Doubles matches and different court surfaces would have improved it

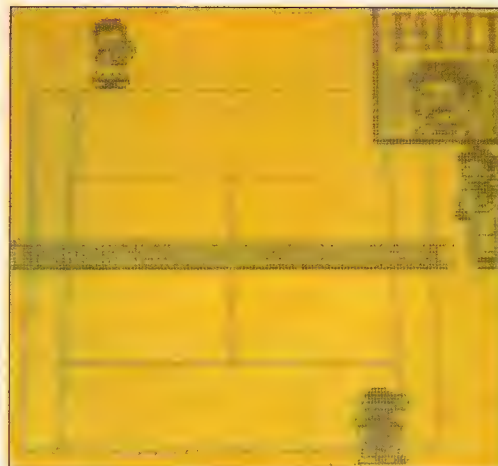


It's looking good. My muscles are toned and warmed up, my stance is perfect and the ball is in the air all lined up for a spectacular ace. If I can just time my swing right...

This doesn't last long though. After a few minutes play you start to pick up the various skills needed to perform backspin and topspin shots, lobs, volleys, and rocketing returns the like of which is only ever seen at Wimbledon.

And the best part about it is the ease with which you can do this. As soon as you swing for the ball you have to push the joypad around to determine the type of shot to be played. Push up for top spin, down for backspin and so on. It all comes naturally and, to be honest, you can pick up all the tricks of the trade without reading the manual.

There are four difficulty levels when you play against the computer. Even level one is quite challenging for the novice, but once you get the hang of it, it shouldn't be too much of a problem. Fortunately the increase in difficulty between the four levels is just right. The opponents in level two are slightly more skillful than those in level one, and not only that but by the time you reach level



Oh poop! A sudden gust of wind must have blown my ball into the net. Tut! I had it all worked out. How can I be expected to win, playing in freak weather conditions?

four they're both better and faster than before.

But by far the best feature is the link-up option. Tennis must be the perfect game to play head-to-head. If you've got a friend with a Game Boy and a copy of Tennis you'll lose countless hours engrossed in this. Anyway, I've said more than enough. Tennis has simple slick graphics, good sound and monumentally good gameplay. Basically buy it... No. Instead buy two, find another Game Boy owner and treat yourselves.

ANDY

TOTAL!

TOTAL!

Looks



■ Excellent animation, and realistic ball movement. Otherwise a bit bland

Sounds



■ Super, triff and brill. Good tunes and sound effects. Cheering crowd is great too

Gameplay



■ Almost faultless, apart from the faults I can't quite put my finger on

Life span



■ Four difficulty settings and a superb one-on-one option make this a long lifer

Stunningly simple tennis simulation, but one which plays much better than those on bigger machines. What do I think of it? Love all!

Final rating
95
Percent



That's more like it. I've succeeded in clawing my way back level with my opponent. Umpire Mario is calling deuce, so whoever wins the next two points also wins the game. Fortunately I've managed to master the controls already. Victory is mine...



... As of the next game. Okay so I lost but apparently it's a sign of real talent to lose the first game of a match, honest. Steffi, my tennis tutor told me, um... Yes. It's all one big clever mind-game to put my opponent off, and only expert tennis players...

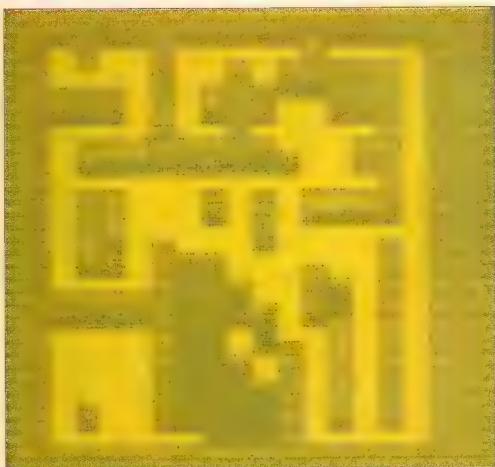
You turn around and run blindly towards the door that you came through. Unfortunately the door has disappeared and you merely succeed in smacking your nose against the wall. You turn around to face the skeletons but they have disappeared. You heave a sigh of relief. But then you do an incredibly stupid thing and take down another weapon. Just as you realise your blunder the skeletons reappear, looking madder than ever. They waste no time in doing away with you. Your stupidity has cost you your life. Start again by turning to page 4.

For Game Boy (1-2 players)

From Acclaim

Price £20

KWIRK



I'd just like to say that I have absolutely no intention whatsoever of showing you how to do this level. It's merely here to illustrate how complex the puzzles get later in the game. (But I can do it, honest!)

I'm getting a bit fruity, me. But not because of hot weather (at this time of year?) or a bevy of beautiful women lounging around the office (fat chance!). No, I'm actually playing the part of Kwirk - a small red tomato whose unfortunate role in life it is to wander around puzzle-filled rooms trying to reach the exit. (And yes, a tomato is a fruit, not a veggie.)

There are only a few elements in each puzzle but the way they're laid out, means they can be anything from a doddle to downright devious. There are rotating blocks, patches of impenetrable blackness that can only be crossed using other

TOMATOES
More than enough puzzle-filled challenging levels for anyone. It's got a tomato in it. Hurrah!

KETCHUPS
The 3D view fails miserably. Difficulty levels one and two are manageable, three is a nightmare

blocks and, er, that's it. What? Only two? Yes, but as I said it's the way they're arranged that matters.

To complete each room, Kwirk has to push blocks out of the way to make a clear route to the exit. This usually involves moving other blocks first to make room, or arranging them neatly so that he can move the other blocks and... Just take a look at the screenshots on this page because they'll illustrate more clearly how the game works than I can explain in words alone.

There are two different game options to choose from (three if you count the puny head-to-head option). One is called 'Heading Out' the other is 'Going Up'. In Heading Out there's a horizontally scrolling play area of between one and 99 rooms (you specify how many you want to do). Each time you complete a room the screen slides across to the next one, and it's a race against the clock to finish them all.

In Going Up each room has a staircase instead of an exit which you must reach. There's no scrolling in this option so the whole screen can be dedicated to much bigger puzzles.

So what else can you do? Well, in both games there are three difficulty levels. Easy, tricky and YEAAAARGH! You can select any level you like on Going Up and can also choose two styles of graphics. There's 'Diagonal' in which things look slightly 3D with shadows. Or 'Bird's Eye View' which basically makes it all looks flat.

Kwirk is simple little game. There may not be

Ooh! Andy's looking a bit Kwirky! - Baghead.

TOTAL!

Looks



■ Neat but plain. At least you can see what's going on (well, except in 3D mode)

Sounds



■ There are loads of pleasing little tunes, and some very Kwirky sound effects

Gameplay



■ Some puzzles are devious beyond belief. Not really what you'd call fun, though

Life span



■ You'll finish the first difficulty level in no time. Level three will take much longer

Standard graphics but the sound is pretty good. It's also very playable. Excellent as an occasional time-filler and should last you a long time.

Final rating
78
Percent

much to it but the puzzles are among the most ingenious and mind-bending I've ever seen. Sometimes frustration sets in with the tougher puzzles, but like all good games you still want to have another go regardless. I like it... Lots! **ANDY**

TOTAL!

Mental block



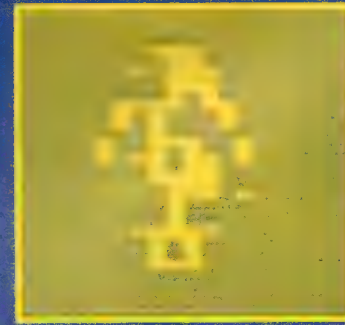
Ah, hello! You've caught me in the middle of a puzzle. It's all right - the only thing I've done so far is to move down here on the left and turn that T-shaped block so that there's a long gap beneath. Where to next...?



Right. It gets a bit cramped in the middle. You may have to rotate the L-shaped blocks several times just to get from one side to the other. All I'm trying to do is get to the other T-shaped block on the right.



Reached it at last! Before moving the T-shape, I need to make sure that the L-shapes are tucked safely out of the way, otherwise I could get trapped. Now I'll rotate the T-shape until the straight edge faces left...



... Like this! There's a gap to the right of the long, grey block, so I can push it as far left as possible. This exposes the gap in the wall so I can nip through to the stairway and move onto the next, more hideous, level!

DR MARIO

**For Game Boy
(1-2 players)
From Nintendo
Price £20**

Take Tetris, shove in a bit of Klax, give it a bad dose of the flu, and you just might end up with Dr. Mario! This very odd tablet-tumbling puzzler puts you in the role of medical Mario as he tries to rid the screen of germs.

There are three different-coloured germs: light, dark and in between. These nasties are only destroyed when lined up with three things of the same colour (like two germs and two tablets). It doesn't matter which way they line up, if they're all the same colour, they disappear.

The tabletty-capsule things Mario throws are made up of two colours which meet in the middle. As they fall you can spin them clockwise or anti-clockwise, and move them from side to side. As you've probably guessed by now, the idea is to link up similarly coloured germs and tablet-halves to gradually clear the screen. It all sounds terribly confusing, but it's as simple as Tetris to play.

However it certainly isn't as enjoyable as the Russian classic. Once you've cleared the top part of the screen and are 'out of danger', it gets pretty tedious picking off the remaining germs. Unless you mess up in a fairly dramatic fashion, the most



CURES

Your ears are in for a treat!
It does throw down the gauntlet to
you for the first few games



COLDS

Tame gameplay doesn't satisfy
in the same way as Tetris



Here's a level plucked at random from the 60 you can take a bash at. I'm just about to get rid of a dark germ, by lining him up with three dark tablet-halves. Simple? No.

difficult part is the first few drops.

Also, in Tetris if you put a block in the wrong place it's possible to build around it with the next few blocks and get out of trouble. With Dr Mario, a badly placed tablet can be fatal (hur, hur), because it takes so many other tablets to get rid of it – especially when the wrong colours keep dropping. If this happens near the top of the screen, it's a guaranteed game over.

There are a few nice things about Dr. Mario, like the choice of tunes (two very good ones), 60 difficulty levels and a Tetris-style two-player mode.

TOTAL!

Looks



■ Nothing too fancy: just neat and simple and clearly visible. That's it really

Sounds



■ There's a pair of spiffy tunes to jolly things along plus some neat bonus jingles

Gameplay



■ It's maddening on the higher levels, and the urge to carry on soon wears off

Life span



■ It doesn't have the same 'hook' as Tetris and is only good for a few weeks' play



But I must admit that the flawed gameplay grows dull pretty quickly. Sorry, but if you've got puzzle fever, Dr. Mario doesn't have the cure. **STEVE** **TOTAL!**

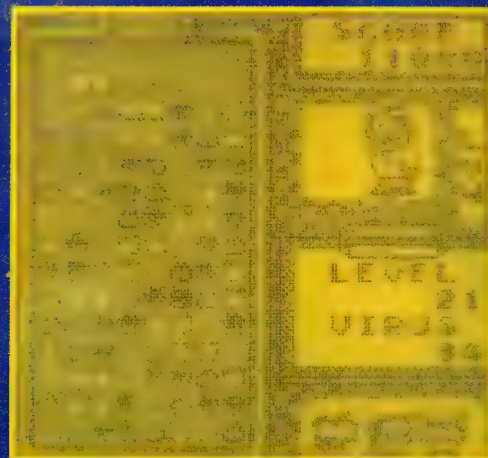
Germ warfare



You join me at the very moment that I complete level 20 on speed 'low'. In the bottom right of the screen you can see the final germ (the last of the dark ones) getting a taste of his own medicine!



At the end of every 20th level, you're treated to this incredibly odd little sequence where the three germs sit underwater, while a little melody plays. On the higher levels, weird fishy-types swim past. Why!?



Right, I'm ready for anything now. Come on level 21, show yourself. You don't frighten m... Gulp. Omigosh! Erm... Look at the time. I really must be going! (Steve? Oy! Come back and finish this caption – AD)

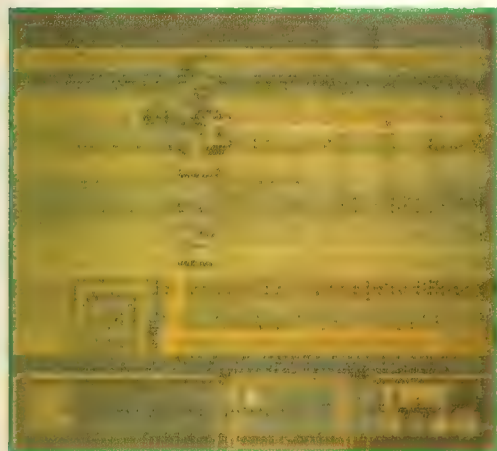
78

NINTENDO WORLD CUP

For Game Boy (1-2 players)

From Nintendo

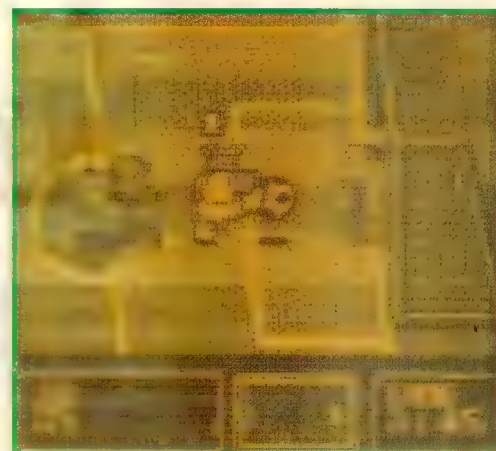
Price £20



Oh dear! Cameroon are the easiest team to beat and already I've given them a corner.



Still, it's nothing a swift elbow in the ribs won't solve. Ha, Ha! Eat dirt Cameroonians!



Ha! Who says crime doesn't pay? My dirty tactics have led to a spectacular goal.

Since when did English footy stars look like spiky-haired hippos wearing frill tutus? Er, since they played in the Nintendo World Cup. Yes, this is a very odd football game indeed. Not only are the players slightly odd but some of the pitch surfaces are a bit on the weird side, like the one that's covered with rocks and clumps of grass for you to trip over.

However, that aside this is a fairly standard footy game. At the start you have to choose which team of mutants you want to control out of a choice of 13. Next you choose your strategy which amounts to deciding whether the computer controlled players on your team do a lot of passing



TACKLES

Oddball graphics make it different to other footy sims

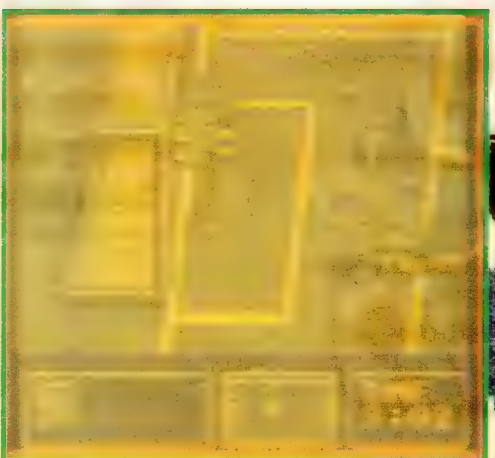


FOULS

The computer-controlled team members hog the ball!



Blimey! The Chinese team must have heard about my 'foul' goal-scoring methods. Now they're trying a few fouls of their own.



But of course, with the world famous Horace 'Hands' McHippo in goal for my team, they didn't really stand a chance.

very old idea. Still, footy fans will love it anyway. But if you're unsure, wait a while. The classic Kick Off is coming to the Game Boy soon and that could prove to be very interesting indeed. **ANDY**

TOTAL!

TOTAL!

Looks



■ The graphics are very unusual, but very well animated. Nice to see originality

Sounds



■ Fairly jolly soundtracks and adequate sound effects, but that's about it

Gameplay



■ It shows promise but it's a bit spoilt by the unintelligent computer players

Life span



■ If you like it, there's plenty of teams to play. But boredom will probably set in

This is very different to many footy sims that have been released. But despite interesting graphics and some nice features it's still flawed.

Final rating
64
Percent



You run north closing the door behind you. The room you are in is empty save for a large pit in the middle of the floor. You look in but it's too dark to see anything. You grab a torch from the wall and have another look in the pit. To your horror, it's full of skeletons and shields and other bits of armour. This is the last resting place of dozens of other unfortunate adventurers. You hear a pounding on the door. It won't be long before the nasties break through and throw you into the pit to join the rest of the failures. Start again on page 4.

For Game Boy (1-2 players)

From Nintendo

Price £20

KING OF THE ZOO



You're an animal, right, and you're trying to become 'king of the zoo' by beating off competition from your furry, feathery chums. Before combat commences you choose one of five characters: penguin, rabbit, bat, cow or rat. The remaining four then act as your opponents in the battles ahead.

Squeaking, squawking sparring partners square up on opposite sides of a flat table. Each animal starts with five balls which are rolled towards the opposition. The loser is the creature with all ten balls on his side of the table, or the most balls when the timer runs out.

It's generally a mad fire-button bash as the balls whizz back and forth. However, the more tactical player can make good use of the super-throw. Press and hold button A and your character



Graphics are a scream – the animation on Rat is well funny!



The two-player option only lets you play one best-of-three game

Rat versus Penguin. Rat is dead slow, but when he does his 'rolling all the balls across the table in line' routine, he suddenly becomes a very worthy opponent!

builds up power, vibrating and humming like a kettle ready to blow its top. As the sound peaks, releasing the fire button releases the ball. If you've lined it up right the ball goes belting across the table and stuns the opposition for a few seconds!

This is where you show no mercy. While the poor animal is thrashing around in a daze, scurry across, pick up another ball and blast them again. Do it five times and it's game over!

If the bout goes the full distance, an odd creature appears on the table for the last 20 seconds, blocking balls and bouncing them off at funny angles. Just when you think you have the bout won, up pops this *thing* and messes you up a treat.

Each round is a best-of-three, and if you win by ten-balling the other player twice, you enter the bonus round. The more balls you can get across the table in 30 seconds, the higher your score.

Once you've beaten all five competitors there's a rostrum award ceremony and then you play them all again. But in the mean time, they've sharpened

Ha! He still didn't beat me! All you have to do is hit him with a super ball. The poor little dweeb stays stunned for ages, so keep on hitting him until you win. A doddle.

reflexes and learned new tactics!

King Of The Zoo is as simple as it sounds, and a lot more fun besides. The action is fast, frantic and furious and the computer opponents really offer a stern challenge. Graphics and sound are spot-on and the two-player option is just one more reason to rush out and buy it! **STEVE**

TOTAL!

TOTAL!

Looks



■ Animal animation is just perfect, and the 3D effect of balls and table works well

Sounds



■ Extremely jolly in-game melodies backed up by suitably wild effects!

Gameplay



■ Wonderfully simple: fast 'n' furious fun you don't need to think hard about

Life span



■ Extremely pick-up-and-playable. There's a great urge to chase that high score!

Squelch Rabbit



Here's poor old Rabbit getting a pasting. Once old lop-ears is down, Cow will just keep rolling balls on top of him.



Later on, and Rabbit's still getting pasted (as seen from Cow's point of view). That thing in the middle just causes havoc!



Weird, wacky and wonderful. Simple ideas are always the best and this one's as simple as Thick! If it's fast action you're after, here it is!

Final rating
87
Percent

You are in an enormous room. You can see a small huddled figure in the distance. As you approach you see that it's an old bearded man huddled over a chess board. The old man looks up scowling and says, 'Pah! I'm the Chess Master. But Gawd knows why they call me that. I never could get the hang of the blasted game anyway. Here, have my last chess set. It's one of the Items you're after.' Oh yes, and that Jetman shouldn't be trusted! 'You thank him and wander off through a door behind the Chess Master. Continue on [page 9](#).

Price £20

Strewth! we've got to do the whole thing all over again!

I hope they pay us this time! I've got an NES and Game Boy to support!



NEXT MONTH

REVIEWS – We'll be taking a closer look at many of the latest NES and Game Boy titles. On the NES we're looking forward to playing Duck Tales, Marble Madness, Quantum Fighter, Dragon's Lair, Kickie Cubicle, Burai Fighter, Mission Impossible, Shadow Gate, Swords and Serpents, A Boy And His Blob, Rollergames, Blue Shadow, Shadow Warrior and Power Blade.

Game Boy players should prepare for the total (heh!) low-down on Boxxle, Rescue Of Princess Blobette, Dyna Blaster, Gremlins 2, Duck Tales, Kung Fu Master, Radar Mission, Samurai Adventure and anything else we can get hold of!

FEATURE – Andy has been up until the early hours preparing a rather nice feature on that matched pair of classic adventure games, Legend Of Zelda and The Adventure Of Link (Zelda II). If you've fancied a bash but weren't too sure, come here next month for some adventuring action!

TOTAL TACTIX – This month's Tactix section was just a taste of what's to come. Next month we'll be giving you help with Time Lord, The Simpsons, Turtles and loads more.

If you have any tips get 'em sent in – you could win a prize! And if you have a game-playing problem, write in and we'll see what we can do!

LETTERS – Get scribbling! We want to know what you think of your new magazine, what you'd like to see and what you think about NES and Game Boy. If you have any problems or questions, send them to Thicky Dyer. If you've got pictures, jokes (preferably about other consoles) or just nice, ordinary letters, send them to Misery Guts Jarratt. Address them to: TOTAL!, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW.

Come mid-day on Thursday 16 January there are going to be some pretty unhappy people milling around outside newsagents. Why? Because the incredibly amazing and really rather good TOTAL! magazine will have sold out (probably).

Avoid this misery by filling in the coupon on the left and giving it to your friendly newsagent. They will – at no extra cost – keep a shiny, happy copy of TOTAL! for you to pick up at your leisure. Do it!

TOTAL!

WHAT A POOP!

MOAN!

When the last copy of TOTAL! has just sold out

WHINGE!

As everyone says how good the reviews are

SIMPER!

When all your mates tell you to push off and get your own copy

CRY!

When your mom refuses to send off for a back issue

CRINGE!

As we try even harder to make you chuckle

Issue 2 of TOTAL! is on sale Thursday 16 January – make sure YOU aren't the person who misses it!

Next month!

All the latest games for your NES and Game Boy!

There's dozens (and dozens) of reviews – so you know what to spend that Christmas cash on!

Special Zelda feature!

Huge feature review of *Legend Of Zelda* and *Zelda II – The Adventure Of Link*!

News and previews!

For all the latest on the world of Nintendo check out TOTAL! issue 2: on sale Thursday 16th January!



Issue 2 – On sale Thursday, 16th January 1992

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